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Paradise to hell : time awareness in F. Scott Fitzgerald's This side of paradise and The beautiful and the damned.

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PARADISE TO HELL:

TIME AWARENESS IN F. SCOTT FITZGERALD'S

THIS SIDE OF PARADISE AND THE BEAUTIFUL AND DAMNED

BY

ERIC CHAMPAGNE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an examination of time awareness in F. Scott Fitzgerald's first two novels, This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and Damned. The concluding paragraphs of The Great Gatsby have been employed as a capsule statement of Fitzgerald's concept of the personal awareness of time. Fitzgerald's view is that as long as there exists an "orgastic future", the "green light" to look forward to, life is worth living. With the realization that the orgastic future is slipping away, Fitzgerald's characters become disillusioned as they encounter in the present a dreadful future of loss, mutability, and mortality. Reluctant to advance into this dreadful future, his characters tend to drift as if time will stand still. But as they are "boats against the current," the drifting of Fitzgerald's characters causes them to be borne back into the past.

Chapter I introduces the thesis, outlining Fitzgerald's perception of time and explaining some approaches to time as they relate to Fitzgerald's novels.

Chapter II and III present a textual analysis of This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and Damned.

Chapter II shows the disillusionment of a young man as he encounters the dreadful future of loss, mutability, and death. Amory, the central figure, tries to reconcile his fear of the future by adopting a present-oriented existential

position by the end of the novel. Nevertheless, the theme of repeating the past is still evident.

Chapter III deals with The Beautiful and Damned, in which there is a greater awareness of the receding future. The figures in this novel must wrestle with what they are, while the problem of what they might be exists only tangentially, since they are always aware of the true nature of their existences. For Anthony, future awareness is life-sapping, and leads him into the dissipating and regressive behavior of alcoholism, drifting, and a final broken retreat into an insanity where he is a little boy again. Gloria's childishness is more of a deliberate decision. Born in Paradise, she chooses to remain young as long as possible, avoiding the dreadful future, but forced to accept it when it comes.

Chapter IV concludes that the remaining novels continue the time themes of the first two. In The Great Gatsby, Fitzgerald demonstrates that the past cannot be repeated. In Tender is the Night, the orgastic future has all but gone, as the Divers and their friends continue drifting, awaiting their dreadful futures. In The Last Tycoon, except for a momentary re-creation of the past, Monroe Stahr awaits an easeful death, as time awareness continues to be a movement from Paradise to Hell.

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Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgiastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter—tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther. . . . And one fine morning——

So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.

The Great Gatsby, p.182.

. . . in a real dark night of the soul it is always three o'clock in the morning, day after day.

"Handle With Care," The Crack-Up, p.75.

. . . what if this night prefigured the night after death—what if all thereafter was an eternal quivering on the edge of an abyss, with everything base and vicious in oneself urging one forward and the baseness and viciousness of the world just ahead. No choice, no road, no hope—only the endless repetition of the sordid and the semi-tragic. Or to stand forever, perhaps, on the threshold of life unable to pass it and return to it. I am a ghost now as the clock strikes four.

"Sleeping and Waking," The Crack-Up, p.67.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On one occasion, John Peale Bishop, F. Scott Fitzgerald's friend and Princeton classmate, complained to him that his problem was that he seemed to believe that life somehow stopped when one was seventeen, and went downhill from then on. "If you make it fifteen," Fitzgerald corrected him, "I will agree with you."[1] This predisposition towards viewing life as a downhill process is apparent in all of F. Scott Fitzgerald's writings, and creates in his works a time awareness that the personal experience of time is one of loss, disappointment, and hopeless futility. Time is worthwhile only as long as there can be expectations and dreams, as long as there exists the "orgastic future." But as that future of great expectations slips away, there remains only the past, and the remembered intensity of bright promises, moments when being did not seem to be the process of moving towards death.

Hence in Fitzgerald's novels there are two kinds of future. There is the orgastic future, with its dreams, promises, and green lights. It is the tomorrow in which, with childlike enthusiasm, "we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther. . . ." In discussing the future in

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[1] John Peale Bishop, "Fitzgerald at Princeton," in F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Man and His Work, ed. Alfred Kazin (N.Y.: Collier Books, 1951), p.48.

Fitzgerald's novels, this thesis will use the term "orgastic" rather than "orgiastic". As Matthew J. Bruccoli indicates in the Apparatus for F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby:

> Fitzgerald clearly intended orgastic—not orgiastic —and explained to Perkins that "it expresses exactly the intended ecstasy"(January 24,1925). In Fitzgerald's marked copy an i is inserted in orgastic, but it is impossible to identify the hand that wrote this single letter as Fitzgerald's.[2]

But as Fitzgerald's characters experience the loss of expectations and the ability to dream, they come to a realization of what to expect of time and the future. This inevitable, ineluctable future leads them from Paradise to Hell. They become conscious "one fine morning" that they no longer have illusions or hopes; they are spiritually dying, perhaps already dead. Life as a forward-moving process has ceased, and as time is frequently described in fluid terms in Fitzgerald's novels, his characters seemingly drift, and like "boats against the current" are "borne back ceaselessly into the past." This is the dreadful future, the future that is encountered in the present. The shock for Fitzgerald's young people is the terror they experience as they try to believe in the green light, and yet hear the hiss of some absurd serpent in their ear, from somewhere in the night, the serpent of awareness whose hiss sometimes sounds like the tick of a clock, the thump of horse's hooves, the drip of

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2 Matthew J. Bruccoli, Apparatus for F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1974), p.50.

raindrops, all measuring out some bit of time, some loss, until one fine morning——

George Poulet in his book, Studies in Human Time, quotes the writing of Quinet, and that writer's experience of the future.

> A strange sickness torments us without respite today . . . What shall I call it? It is no longer like thine, Rene, a sickness of ruins; ours is more alive, more burning with pain. Each day it revives the heart the better to feed upon it. It is the pain of the future, sleepless, piercing pain which says to you every hour at your bedside: 'Art thou asleep? But I am awake.' Deep in our souls we already know what is going to happen. This nothing is already something; it beats within our breast. We see it, we touch it, though the world ignores it still. What kills us . . . is having to support the weight of the future in the void of the present. [3]

Quinet identifies the pain of the future, which is an unbearable burden for Fitzgerald's characters. The dread and fear are only too painfully real in the present, so much so, that awareness of the future discourages them from future actions, and robs them of the ability to do "next things."

That an interest in the idea of time is expressed in the writings of F. Scott Fitzgerald comes as no surprise to even the most casual of his readers. A survey of the titles of his novels and his collected stories reveals his concern with the problems of time. If we are born out of "Paradise," the future seems to bear us in the direction of hell, hence we are "Damned." For Fitzgerald the night is an important metaphor: "in a real dark night of the soul it is always three o'clock

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3 George Poulet, Studies in Human Time, trans. Elliott Coleman (New York: Harper Brothers, 1956), pp.28-29.

in the morning, day after day."[4] Consequently our true souls live in darkness, sightless voices, like ghosts in the night. "Tender is the night," Keats reminds us at the beginning of Fitzgerald's fourth novel, where ". . . there is no light, /Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown."[5] The action of The Great Gatsby begins and ends at night, and in fact most of the action in Fitzgerald's novels seems to take place in the night. It is as if his characters haunt a night-world, the ghosts of their daytime existences. Philosopher Karl Jaspers reminds us that the law of the day

> imparts order to human life; it demands clarity, coherence, fidelity, reasonableness. But the passion of the night breaks down every order and plunges man into the abyss of nothingness.[6]

Yet there is no consolation in the dawn, no rebirth. There are only The Taps at Reveille, the harkening to one's own impending defeat, via time, by death. Even at birth, the taps serve as a reminder of the beginning of death. For Gatsby, the knowledge that there is no return to Paradise, no re-creating the past, comes suddenly. Painfully ripped from the womblike "old warm world"[7] of the past, Gatsby is hurled

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4 F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Handle with Care," in The Crack-Up, ed. Edmund Wilson (New York: New Directions, 1945), p.75.

5 Tender is the Night (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933), title page. All further references to the novel are from this edition.

6 Quoted from The Existentialist Revolt, ed. Kurt F. Reinhardt (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1960), p.197.

7 F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), p.162. All further references to the novel are from this edition.

swiftly through a present in which

> He found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw the sunlight was upon the scarcely created grass. A new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts, breathing dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about . . . (p.162)

Psychologically, man's concern with time begins at birth. As Norman O. Brown points out:

> It is in the nature of finite things, says Hegel, that the hour of their birth is the hour of their death. Hence the incapacity of the human species to die, and therefore to live, begins at birth . . .
> This incapacity to die, ironically but inevitably, throws mankind out of the actuality of living, which for all normal animals is at the same time dying; the result is denial of life (repression). The incapacity to accept death turns the death instinct into its distinctively human and distinctively morbid form. The distraction of human life to the war against death, by the same inevitable irony, results in death's dominion over life. The war against death takes the form of a preoccupation with the past and the future, and the present tense, the tense of life, is lost . . . [8]

Awareness of loss, change, and personal mortality (the inevitable victory of death over life), contributes to the nothingness over which man's existence hovers. And as Dick Diver reminds us in Tender is the Night, "The strongest guard is placed at the gateway to nothing, . . . Maybe because the condition of emptiness is too shameful to be divulged"(p.70).

There are various ways of escaping fear of time and awareness of one's subjection to its devouring aspects. One way is to transcend time, by becoming eternal. To do this

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8 Norman O. Brown, Life Against Death (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan Press, 1959), p.284.

requires some kind of device by which to continue beyond the mortal self. Identification with a community of beings and their sense of past and continued history can offer the sense of purpose and durability that an isolated existence cannot experience. For example, in The Great Gatsby, Tom Buchanan worries that "Civilization's going to pieces"(p.13). Fearing the rise of the colored races, Tom asserts that "It's up to us, who are the dominant race, to watch out or these other races will have control of things"(p.13).

Along the same lines, having children can promote a sense of continued creation beyond individual death. Art is another avenue of transcendence, in its continuation beyond the death of the creator, as well as in the immediate gratification of capturing some moment that otherwise would be lost. Richard Carmel, the writer in The Beautiful and Damned, becomes worried, not when he thinks he can't write, but when he wonders "whether any writing is worth while at all." [9] The essential timelessness of unconscious mental processes offers another avenue of escape, into no-time, oblivion, unconsciousness, usually accomplished via sleep, drugs, or alcohol.

Yet another way of escaping the future is into the past. As children, our time scheme is pleasantly present. As Marie Bonaparte writes in Chronos, Eros, Thanatos:

The days of the child seem to unfold in some sense

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9 F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Beautiful and Damned (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922), p.188. All further references to the novel are from this edition.

> outside of our time. These days of childhood —let us recall them——seem to the child as if they were eternal . . . Of course the important persons who bring up the child strictly impose the scheme of time on him . . . but he feels the imposition of adult time by adults as an alien intrusion into his own time, which is essentially in some sense infinite. 10

Eventually the time scheme tends to dominate the individual, resulting for some in a fixation on the past and the repetition-pleasure principle, which can be termed neurosis, or else fixation on the future, in the form of anxiety.

In Fitzgerald's novels the disillusionment his characters experience is over the acquisition of time awareness, the loss of being able to dream, to feel, to live eternally in Paradise. As Fitzgerald wrote in "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz", "His was a great sin who first invented consciousness." 11

Awareness of the future, it seems, saps Fitzgerald's characters of the ability to act in the present and they are reduced to drifting through time towards a dark hell. Anthony Patch does nothing, for there is nothing worth doing, and drifts. Even Gatsby's illusion that he could repeat the past is finally punctured as he ends knowing "he had lost the old warm world"(p. 162) (womblike); symbolically his dead body drifts about a pool of water that scarcely flows towards the drain.

The experience of time as a fluid substance is signi-

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10 Marie Bonaparte, Chronos, Eros, Thanatos (Presses Universitaires de France, 1962), p.11-12.

11 F. Scott Fitzgerald, Babylon Revisited and Other Stories (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), p.113.

ficant in Fitzgerald's novels. All the main characters usually end up drifting in one form or another. In The Beautiful and Damned, Joe Hull, as the loathesome representation of future dread and the future Anthony Patch, underlines this concept of people as boats drifting, empty hulks. Gatsby dies while floating in a swimming pool. Dick Diver states at one point that "Smart men play close to the line because they have to—some of them can't stand it, so they quit"(p.99). Later, on a boat significantly termed the "Margin," Dick suggests, "It'd be a good setting to jump overboard"(p.274). Subsequently, as his deterioration continues in the light of his forsaken future, we learn that Doctor Diver has "for the first time . . . avoided high diving"(p.282), and that he is unable to perform a water stunt that two years earlier he had been able to perform, an embarrassing reminder of his deterioration and loss. Monroe Stahr in The Last Tycoon literally works himself to death, until he sees a girl who looks exactly like his much-loved, dead wife. Significantly, he views the girl "at night . . . in an enchanted distorted way," as she comes "floating down the current of an impromptu river"[12] on the huge head of the goddess Siva. Only this sudden flood of memory allows Stahr to halt his unremitting pace of work.

The theme of regression to childhood is an important one in Fitzgerald's writing, and is one of the reasons why for

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12 F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Last Tycoon (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), p.25. All further references to this novel are from this edition.

Fitzgerald, life seems to turn around at fifteen. In The Beautiful and Damned the main characters are frequently described as children. After his crack-up at the end of the novel, Anthony Patch is reduced to playing with the stamp collection that had been his pride at fourteen. Like a baby in a carriage, he sits bundled up in a wheelchair, thinking that "they" had tried to punish him for the mistakes of his youth. Like a small boy who has just gotten even with a bully he proclaims triumphantly that he showed them. "It was a hard fight but I didn't give up and I came through"(p.449), although his rebirth is into a mentally broken middle-aged man.

The childhood themes are continued in Fitzgerald's later novel Tender is the Night. Robert Stanton points out the incest-motifs of that novel in his article "Daddy's Girl: Symbol and Theme in Tender is the Night."[13] Dick Diver near the end is referred to as Baby Dick and Nicole's protective older sister, Baby Warren, wanders in and out of the novel like the parental eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg ready to pass judgment on Dick.

In This Side of Paradise, Amory feels that children are the infinite hope of the future but fears that he will grow up into something that frightens them.

Appropriately alcohol plays an interesting function in the time experience of Fitzgerald's characters.

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13 Robert Stanton, "Daddy's Girl: Symbol and Theme in Tender is the Night," in Tender is the Night: Essays in Criticism, ed. M. J. LaHood (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), p.156-64.

In Tender is the Night, Abe North is

> . . . happy to live in the past. The drink made past happy things contemporary with the present, as if they were still going on, contemporary even with the future as if they were about to happen again.(p.103)

In The Beautiful and Damned, alcohol is described as a "gay and delicate poison which would restore them momentarily to the pleasurable excitement of childhood"(p.213). Gloria pleads with Anthony not to drink because "you're so simple when you're drunk"(p.268). Nevertheless he hates to be sober because it makes him conscious of the people around him, and by the end of the book he is a hopeless alcoholic. After a drunken spree Gloria and Anthony, hung over but still drunk, wonder what time it is, or for that matter, what day it is, and state that they "feel like the devil . . . Bring on your grim reaper"(p.220). For Amory in This Side of Paradise,[14] drunkenness provides a "merciful coma." So not only does drinking serve as a way to avoid awareness of the process of moving time, it also confers the benefit of allowing one to regress while mimicking death. It is worth noting that not only does alcohol reduce one's experience of fear, it also functions to suppress the superego, and at the peak of intoxication the individual, in motor ability, speech, and emotional level, resembles a three-year-old child. Consequently alcohol not only serves as a useful vehicle for moving about time, it also helps in avoiding dreadful

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[14] F. Scott Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), p.198. All further references to this novel are from this edition.

awareness of the loss of time as well. As Fitzgerald depicts it, drunkenness is almost an escape into eternity, where the past, present, and future all exist at the same time.

This thesis concerns itself primarily with F. Scott Fitzgerald's first two novels, This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and Damned. These two novels have been selected on the view that Fitzgerald's perception of time had already been determined at their writing and that his later, more mature works only bear out his original concept of time. If Fitzgerald's novels offer a history of his imagination and thought, these first two novels provide the greatest access to the author's essential artistic perception of time. Although these novels possess some structural deficiencies, since the young writer was learning his craft, we do know that a great deal of attention was given to their content.

As a slice-of-life, or saturation novel, This Side of Paradise "is the representation of an abundance of events . . . . Experiences are included because they are inherently interesting."[15] As James E. Miller states:

> By definition the saturation novel is not about any one thing: it is about "life" and must, therefore, include those irrelevancies which prevent life itself from coming to a focus and being about something.[16]

In a letter to John Peale Bishop, Fitzgerald wrote about The Beautiful and Damned, "I devoted so much more

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15 James E. Miller, F. Scott Fitzgerald : His Art and Technique (New York: New York University Press, 1964), p.43.

16 Miller, p.25.

care myself to the detail of the book than I did to thinking out the general scheme."[17] The Beautiful and Damned contains Fitzgerald's "acute sense of disaster and his ability to realize the minutiae of humiliation and suffering."[18] For these reasons these two novels provide a greater access to the basic Fitzgerald, the disillusioned young man who somehow endures, trying to believe in the "green light". As Fitzgerald tells us, "we inherited two worlds—the one of hope to which we had been bred; the one of disillusion which we had discovered early for ourselves."[19]

Chapters II and III, therefore, are close textual analyses of This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and Damned, respectively. These chapters explore the time awareness of the various major characters, and demonstrate that the increasing awareness of the devouring aspects of time is a life-sapping process for Fitzgerald's characters which leaves them disillusioned and drifting in a kind of death-in-life. It will be shown that this process is frequently described in terms of a movement from Paradise (the orgastic future) to damnation and Hell (the dreadful future). Also demonstrated are the various themes and images of light-darkness, regression, and

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17 F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Letters to Friends", The Crack-Up, p.258.

18 Arthur Mizener, The Far Side of Paradise (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965), p.154.

19 F. Scott Fitzgerald, "My Generation", in Profile of F. Scott Fitzgerald, by M. J. Bruccoli (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1971), p.7.

time-as-fluid, already outlined above, that serve to underline Fitzgerald's perception of time.

By way of conclusion, Chapter IV briefly outlines the subsequent novels, showing that the time awareness and the Paradise-Hell motifs continue throughout his later works. Against the background of a valley of ashes (Hell), the protagonist in The Great Gatsby learns that he cannot repeat the past. Having lost his illusion of an orgastic future, Gatsby is hurled painfully through a present of disillusionment and hopelessness into a dreadful future world peopled by ghosts and dead dreams. In Tender is the Night, Dick Diver is a kind of orphaned Savior, descended from a heaven (Paradise) that no longer exists. Described as the spiritual giver of live for a group of otherwise spiritually hollow people, Dick Diver compromises his own orgastic future in order that others might have the facsimile of one. For his wife Nicole, whose future had been removed by an incestuous episode in her youth, Dick provides a new hope and new future in his own future. In The Last Tycoon, death is near and the light of the orgastic future has apparently been entirely extinguished. Except for a brief rekindling of memory which momentarily revives Monroe Stahr's recollections of an earlier, more hopeful period in his life, the orgastic future has indeed receded, as the novel's protaganist works relentlessly, as if killing time, while he awaits an easeful death.

CHAPTER II

THIS SIDE OF PARADISE

> It is youth's felicity as well as its insufficiency that it can never live in the present, but must always be measuring up the day against its own radiantly imagined future—
>
> "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz," Babylon Revisited and Other Stories, pp.89-90.

As a young man's novel, This Side of Paradise is primarily concerned with the future, the hopeful, orgastic future of possibilities. Still close to Paradise, since he is just this side of it, Amory Blaine believes that his future will be grand. Amory will be "a boy marked for glory" (p.17). Nevertheless, time awareness is manifested in This Side of Paradise in the acquired awareness of personal mortality and the smaller, daily deaths of the human personality. The cost of consciousness is high, as the quote from which the title is taken indicates: ". . . Well this side of Paradise! . . . / There's little comfort in the wise." One of Amory's girlfriends will leave him because he makes her think. Another one, Eleanor, will compare the beat of horse's hooves to the ticking of a clock measuring out eternity into so many units, concluding that ". . . that's the only thing that separates horses and clocks from us. Human beings can't go 'tump-tump-tump' without going crazy"(p.237). Moments later

she will charge towards a cliff on this clock/horse and send it plunging over the edge into the abyss (hell) to its death while barely saving herself. This incident recalls the earlier death of one of Amory's idols, Dick Humbird, who doesn't ever seem to perspire yet who dies "the way animals die"(p.87). Eleanor's daredevil tactics, meant to show her freedom from time and death, end up betraying her fear and awareness of both.

For Amory, the orgastic future radiates with the vision of all the grand things he will be. He sees himself as "a boy marked for glory" and as the "youngest general in the world. It was always the becoming he dreamed of, never the being" (pp.17-18). Amory

> was planning his life. He was going to live in New York, and be known at every restaurant and café, wearing a dress suit from early evening to early morning, sleeping away the dull hours of the forenoon.(p.31)

He would be "the eternal hero, one with the sea-rover on the prow of a Norse galley, one with Roland and Horatius, Sir Nigel and Ted Coy"(p.31). Amory's favorite pastime in college is outlining the respective futures of his classmates which invariably would involve some wild stuff in college, settling down, going into their fathers' businesses, getting married, having four sons, and dying when they were forty-one. Nevertheless, "in Princeton every one . . . told themselves privately that their deaths at least would be heroic"(p.147).

Since Amory tends to see the future as a schedule of planned events, the orderly progression of things along the line of his becoming (similar to young Jay Gatz's schedule),

he wants particularly

> to know the time, for something in his mind that catalogued and classified liked to chip things off cleanly. Later it would satisfy him in a vague way to be able to think "that thing ended at exactly twenty minutes after eight on Thursday, June 10, 1919."(p.198)

As Amory gets older, the future becomes more difficult. This is especially true after the death of Dick Humbird, when Amory must begin losing his illusions about an orgastic future and must confront the dreadful future that is experienced in the present.

Fitzgerald's use of time in This Side of Paradise displays the disillusionment with the future and the tendency to drift. While there is throughout the novel a marked momentum towards future awareness, a regular thrusting of Amory into a painful existential awareness of the dreadful future, the past is always hovering in the back of Amory's life, ready to intrude and color the night of his experience. The past here, as in Fitzgerald's later novels, is always ready to step in to determine the present and dictate the future. Although the future is sometimes regarded as the inevitable working out of some destiny, painful or tragic, there is always the present moment, which always overrides any unhappiness or displeasure with its intensity. As G. C. Millard points out:

> The sense of failure and disillusionment in the novels never becomes, for any main character, bitterness, violence or resolution, because of the writer's acute, personal, obsessive sympathy with the experience of intense hope,

> the non-realization of which cannot invalidate the experience.[1]

Although the characters in This Side of Paradise seem to long to cling to the moment, they are never naive about its nature. Instead, there is an awareness of the essential transience of the moment, that it is approaching and will be lost. At each moment the protagonists hear the stark cry, "Nevermore!" Consequently the present moment radiates back and forth across the instance of its occurrence, a meeting place for the past and the future.

In the relationship with Isabelle, Amory's first serious love, we have a demonstration of how the moment in time really operates in the lives of the characters. Amory first says:

> . . . Maybe we'll never meet again like this . . . I've fallen for a lot of people—girls—and I guess you have, too—boys, I mean, but honestly, you— . . . Oh, what's the use—you'll go your way and I suppose I'll go mine.(p.68)

——which is what will happen. Yet for them there is "the inevitable looming charmingly close"(p.69), the magic moment. For Isabelle, "the future vista of her life seemed an unending succession of scenes like this"(p.69). As the lovers are posed, lips half-parted, like figures on a Grecian urn, their moment is interrupted. "It was evidently over"(p.70). Her girlfriend later asks her if Amory had had a "time" with her in the den, to which she answers "No . . . I don't do that

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1 G.C. Millard, "F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Great Gatsby, Tender is the Night and The Last Tycoon," in Tender is the Night : Essays in Criticism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), p.20.

sort of thing any more"(p.70). And yet she feels deprived, somehow.

The time function in This Side of Paradise quite often comes cloaked in religious or Biblical allusions.[2] This perception of time as a religion is corroborated by Norman O. Brown:

> The intermediate term between psychoanalysis and money, is religion. Economists and scientists must face up to the fact that in dealing with time at all they are dealing with a religion.(p.273)

Amory's emergence from Paradise, his awakening to consciousness and experience, his subjection to mortal time, his reveille, comes with his first romantic encounter. "He had never kissed a girl before, and he tasted his lips curiously, as if he had munched some new fruit." Having tasted this new fruit, biblically, the fruit of knowledge and experience, he is filled with "sudden revulsion . . . disgust, loathing for the whole incident"(p.14). Like Adam aware of his nakedness, Amory becomes conscious of their faces, and their hands touching. Staring at her, he is aware of her as "a new animal of whose presence on the earth he had not heretofore been aware." As the incident comes to a close, he is aware of the sound of a "graphophone mingled with the voices of many girls humming" a tune about Casey Jones who "Took his farewell journey to the prom-ised land"(p.15).

The attraction of the night as the setting for much of the action in Fitzgerald's novels is understandable as a

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2. Norman O. Brown, p.273.

symbolic representation of the atmosphere of the soul, the inner being for whom it is always three o'clock in the morning. Of his writing, Fitzgerald said, "That's the stamp that goes into my books, so that people can read it like Braille."[3] Conscious of the darkness in which human existence dwells, Fitzgerald wrote for the sightless eyes of the soul.

The symbolic meaning of the night is exemplified in Amory's experience of one evening at Princeton. In a section titled "A Damp Symbolic Interlude," Amory is standing next to a sundial. At night a sundial doesn't operate, which implies that time has perhaps stopped somehow. In this setting, Amory stretches himself out on the damp grass, where "the cool bathed his eyes and slowed the flight of time—time that had crept so insidiously . . . seemed so intangible"(p.54). In this state of arrested time, or timelessness, Amory can reflect on the other aspects of time, the past and the future. Of the past he observes about his school how "the gray walls and Gothic peaks . . . symbolized . . . warehouses of dead ages" (p.54). A tower, a symbol of his perception, "yearning higher until it was half invisible in the sky," gives him "the first sense of the transiency and unimportance of the campus figures except as holders of the apostolic succession." Contemplating his future, Amory decides in a moment of resolve that next year he'll work at school, only to realize "his own inconsequence," and that "effort would make him aware of his own

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3 F. Scott Fitzgerald, "The Note-books," in The Crack-Up, ed. Edmund Wilson (New York: New Directions, 1945), p.180.

impotency and insufficiency "(p.54). Nevertheless, he feels a "nervous excitement" as "the college dreamed on awake . . . It was a stream where he was to throw a stone whose faint ripple would be vanishing almost as it left his hand "(p.54). Another scene, later on, will have Amory and Eleanor, his "fellow lunatic"(p.227), standing in the pitch black of night, an atmosphere in which Eleanor will observe that "we're just voices now . . . . little lonesome voices "(p.234). Thus the night, while creating an atmosphere of timelessness for the individual, also emphasizes his basic aloneness.

Without a doubt, the precipitating factor in Amory's time awareness centers around the death of one of Amory's classmates, Dick Humbird. Dick (a Dick Diver prototype) is Amory's idol, his conception of human perfection in manners and style. Initially his god, Dick Humbird later returns to haunt him as a devil, the dreadful spectre of death and human mortality, as well as the representative of what he wished to be or will likely become in the orgastic future. This concept of an evil, frightening God continues later in the image of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg underlining the disillusionment experienced when Paradise becomes Hell.

During a supper outing with some classmates, Amory feels that Humbird, while not the life of the party, is part of its spiritual center:

> Dick Humbird had ever since freshman year seemed to Amory a perfect type of aristocrat. . . . Everything he said sounded intangibly appropriate. He possessed infinite courage, an averagely good mind, and a sense of honor

> with a clear charm and noblesse oblige that varied from righteousness. He could dissipate without going to pieces, and even his most bohemian adventures never seemed "running it out." People dressed like him, tried to talk as he did. . . .
> He differed from the healthy type that was essentially middle class—he never seemed to perspire. . . . Humbird could have lunched at Sherry's with a colored man, yet people would have somehow known that it was all right. He was not a snob, though he knew only half his class. His friends ranged from the highest to the lowest . . . . Servants worshipped him, and trusted him like a god. He seemed the eternal example of what the upper class tries to be.(pp.77-78)

Yet Amory is distressed to hear:

> " . . . if you want to know the shocking truth, his father was a grocery clerk who made a fortune in Tacoma real estate and came to New York ten years ago."
> Amory . . . felt a curious sinking sensation.(p.78)

Humbird's Christlikeness is further suggested by the Last Supper-like description of their party as "a last desperate attempt to know itself, to keep together, to fight off the tightening spirit . . ."(p.78). On another outing a month later there will be an automobile accident and Dick Humbird's mortality will come crashingly home to Amory. Once again the equation of Dick Humbird to Christ on Calvary is implied. While one is dead there are "two others about dead"(p.86). Upon this revelation we hear a cry of "My God!"(p.86). Under the light of a cross-like roadside arclight, the dead body is turned over and identified as Dick Humbird. Once again, this fact brings the response "Oh, Christ!"(p.86). With 'a sudden hardness'(p.86), Amory examines the hands and feet of his god:

> . . . he raised one of the hands and let it fall back inertly. The brow was cold but the face not expressionless. He looked at the shoelaces—Dick had tied them that morning. He had tied them—and now he was this heavy white mass. All that remained of the charm and personality of the Dick Humbird he had known—oh, it was all so horrible and unaristocratic and close to the earth. . . . so useless, futile . . . the way animals die. . . . Amory was reminded of a cat that had lain horribly mangled in some alley of his childhood.(pp.86-7)

What does all this mean for Amory? As Milton Stern points out, "Fitzgerald begins Amory's education into evil and dread by reducing Humbird to the actualities of the time, earth, and mortality that his appearances had seemed to deny." Fitzgerald, "having identified Humbird with the personality beyond earth and time . . . then proceeds to show that earth and time are what everyman sweatily belongs to."[4] It is worth noting that one of the conditions of man's exile from Paradise is that he should work by the sweat of his brow. Amory, in trying to deny his subjection to this condition, states that he doesn't want to arrive at anything by working for it, which is in accordance with his system (idleness)(p.98).

Amory, skeptically aware now that all men-gods are mortal, is not prepared for his encounter with the devil some months later. Bursting into a cafe "like Dionysian revellers"(p.109), Sloan, the other half of the Humbird-Sloan nucleus of months earlier, shouts that he will "shake a wicked calf"(p.110). while Amory's date cries out to a friend from New Haven who, Amory concludes, is a "natural damn fool." Although setting out to have a good time, Amory feels "quite tiresomely sober"(p.111),

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4 Milton R. Stern, The Golden Moment: The Novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970), p.61.

while the rest of the party have arrived at various stages of exhilaration. It is at this point that Amory becomes aware of a man, "a middle-aged man dressed in a brown sack suit"(p.111), sitting at a table by himself and smiling faintly at Amory's glance. Indignantly Amory complains about "that pale fool" watching him. Sloan suggests that they'll have him thrown out, but doesn't seem to be able to see him.

Moving from the café to one of the girls' flats, Amory agrees with himself that he hasn't been drinking, and that he'll just stay half an hour and leave. However , as the party gets going, Amory soon finds himself with a glass of brandy in hand and a girl's head on his shoulder. "There was a minute when temptation crept over him . . . and his imagination turned to fire"(p.112). But at that moment, Amory drops the glass, as he is startled to see the man from the cafe, half-sitting, half-leaning on a divan across the room from him. Suggestive of Satan and Hell, the man has the "pasty color of a dead man . . . but like a strong man who'd worked in a mine or done night shifts in a damp climate"(p.113). But what terrifies Amory are his feet. As Dick Humbird's shoes had made Amory aware of the suddenness with which life passes into death, the man's feet make Amory's blood rush to his head as he suddenly realizes that he is afraid. "The feet were all wrong . . . with a sort of wrongness that he <u>felt rather than knew</u>"(p.113). The man wore no shoes but rather pointed half-moccasins with curled up toes. These shoes "were unutterably terrible"(p.113). As he flees from the room he

is plagued by the feet, "Those feet . . . those feet . . . " (p.114). In the street, Amory likens his mooncast shadow as being as far ahead of him as "soft shoes was presumably . . . behind"(p.114). Yet as the scuffling grows nearer a black cloud settles over the moon and it is as if the shadow and soft shoes, as representations of Amory's past and future selves, have met in this moment (the dark moment of entering his soul). Immediately afterwards Amory realizes "that the footsteps were not behind, had never been behind, they were ahead and he was not eluding but following . . . following" (p.115). What he has been following is the likely path his life was taking, the path of becoming that leads to the being. In this image of a middle-aged man, Amory sees what he's becoming, the path he has been taking. During all this time, Amory realizes:

> He had a sense of reality such as material things could never give him. His intellectual content seemed to submit passively to it, and it fitted like a glove everything that had ever preceeded it in his life. It did not muddle him. . . . He was far beyond horror. He had sunk through the thin surface of that, now moved in a region where the feet and the fear of white walls were real, living things, things he must accept. Only far inside his soul a little fire leaped and cried that something was pulling him down, trying to get him inside a door and slam it behind him. After that door was slammed there would be only footfalls and white buildings in the moonlight, and perhaps he would be one of the footfalls.(p.115)

What is pulling him is the anti-life force of avoiding awareness of the future, knowing that everything leads to death of one kind or another. Consciousness of one's mortality leads to a negation of life in its tendency to make one past-

oriented, denying the dreadful future. Thus it is easier to follow some kind of regressive path, satisfying the need to acknowledge oblivion, yet remain living. Hence Amory, having "sunk" into a region of awareness where he must accept his fear and knowledge of man's mortality, hears the footfalls of the many, the "stupid" and "good"(p.115). These people kill time, spend time, by indulging in appearances, material concerns, drinking, or even working, doing anything not to be aware of the tyranny of the moment and go crazy, as Eleanor says they would. One moment leads to the next, but at some point they run out. Hence the impetus to come inside and slam the door behind, to lock the door on time, to pretend to have locked something out, not oneself in. Amory's cry for someone stupid (not aware, non-thinking) is "almost instinct . . . or some wild prayer from way over the night"(p.116). His wild prayer is like a desperate plea to a heaven that has forsaken him. In the Bible, the happiness of Paradise was that Adam and Eve were free of the knowledge of good and evil. Ignorance was bliss. The wild prayer seems to bring about the clanging of a gong in the distance, and a face flashed over the two feet, "distorted with a sort of infinite evil"(p.116), and Amory knows that the face is Dick Humbird's.

Dick Humbird, once representative of the orgastic future, is now like a malevolent God (devil), a Savior who can offer only spiritual or physical death as a salvation. The devil figure in <u>This Side of Paradise</u> is representative of a lost eternity and innocence, replaced by a dreadful awareness of

man's mutability and mortality. Existence becomes a consciousness of the grotesqueness of the human condition as it slips into the dreadful darkness of awareness. Escape from this condition seems to be in not being conscious, that is, in being stupid. The next day, Sloan seems to suggest that Amory suffers from some kind of existential nausea when he remarks that Amory "had some sort of indigestion" that made him "act like a maniac"(p.117). In the doorway of his room a wave of "sudden blackness flowed around him like a divided river" (p.117), perhaps the River Styx. Again, a "deadly fear that he was going mad" makes him want "some one sane and stupid and good"(p.117).

Milton Stern sees the devil of Dick Humbird in terms of devotion of one's life to personality, appearances, materialism, mammon, the golden calf. Yet the evil can also be construed in the existential terms of dreadful insight, knowledge of the frailty of man's existence when measured against time, and the knowledge of death.

The evil of time in the experience of dread it creates is also consistent within the terms of the Fall from Paradise. The price of ejection from Paradise for Adam is awareness, knowledge that he is mortal and will toil by the sweat of his brow, a condition to which Amory felt Dick Humbird was not subject. Ironically, Amory had said earlier that he did not want "to get anywhere by working for it," because he'd "show the marks"(p.46).

After Humbird's death, Amory's awareness of time, change,

and loss begins to grow. During a class he writes a poem, "Songs in the Time of Order," which explains that "Time was the end of riddles,/We were the end of time . . . "(p.152). In a section titled "The End of Many Things," Amory declares "Time, damn it . . . If we could only learn to look on evil as evil"(p.153). On their last night before departure to different military camps, Amory and his roommate, Tom, seem to see the faces of various men they knew, as they pace the "shadowy walks." The two men comment that "The grass is full of ghosts tonight," the campus being "alive with them"(p.153). They are aware that they are leaving a time that will never be again, leaving "the whole heritage of youth"(p.153). The campus, although the warehouse of dead ages, is still set against a sky that has the "promise of dawn"(p.154), which Tom admits "hurts," and

> For an instant the voices of freshman year surged around them and then they looked at each other with faint tears in their eyes.
> "Damn!"
> "Damn!"
> . . . . . .
>
> No more to wait the twilight of the moon . . . for one eternal morning of desire passes to time and earthly afternoon. Here, Heraclitus, did you find in fire and shifting things the prophecy you hurled down the dead years; this midnight my desire will see, shadowed among the embers, furled in flame, the splendor and the sadness of the world.(p.154)

After going through a war in which he sees no action but loses a few college friends, Amory will next experience his most painful loss, the loss of his most significant love, Rosalind. In his experience with Rosalind, Amory once again

must be made aware of the realities of time. When they fall in love almost immediately Rosalind says of them, "We haven't the same standards of time as other people"(p.176). Amory rather naively states, "I'm romantic—a sentimental person thinks things will last—a romantic person hopes against hope that they won't"(p.177), although he'll be thoroughly crushed when they don't.

Wanting to kiss Rosalind, Amory is completely surprised when she refuses:

> He: (Openly taken aback) You wanted to kiss me a minute ago.
> She: This is now.(p.177)

Rosalind is much too much of a present-oriented person for Amory. She lives for the moment. For her "There is a moment . . . something that makes it worth while"(p.181). Rosalind wants to draw all she can from her time, from these moments, which makes her a kind of "vampire," as one of her beaux calls her. As their love grows deeper with the passing weeks, a kind of panic sets in. Amory wonders, "I'm so happy that I'm frightened. Wouldn't it be awful if this was—was the high point?" (p.188) which, Rosalind suggest, is probably the case. "Beauty and love pass, I know. . . . Oh, there's sadness, too. I suppose all great happiness is a little sad. Beauty means the scent of roses and then the death of roses——"(p.188). For Rosalind the death of roses makes life poignant although for someone like Gatsby it makes life grotesque. Rosalind's attitude towards time demands acknowledging the essence and death of the moment and still risking the experience. Amory is told

of an incident when Rosalind, in the company of one of her boyfriends, had heard of a girl diving off the top of a rickety summer house into the water. Immediately she had dashed off and duplicated the action "in a beautiful swan dive" (p.189). Her boyfriend feels compelled to follow suit, but admits that he "nearly killed" himself attempting the same thing. The diving is representative of her attitude to time. Rosalind fearlessly plunges into the moment regardless of future consequences.

As the weeks go by, Rosalind will end their romance because "The very qualities I love you for are the ones that will always make you a failure"(p.193), and she would "rather keep it as a beautiful memory"(p.194). For Amory, though, there will not be "the beauty of it while it lasted, but just the bitterness, the long bitterness"(p.194). In spite of her choice, Rosalind cannot deny that she has lost something.

Amory's reaction to this is to lose himself in the oblivion, the "merciful coma"(p.198), of a drunken spree. But before he can proceed with blotting out his painful consciousness he must first look at his wrist watch:

> he wanted particularly to know the time, for something in his mind that catalogued and classified liked to chip things off cleanly. Later it would satisfy him in a vague way to be able to think "that thing ended at exactly twenty minutes after eight on Thursday, June 10, 1919."(p.198)

During Amory's flight into a death-like alcoholic stupor, he encounters the time/death shoe imagery again. A friend trys to remove Amory's shoes, saying "something about a knot in his

shoe-lace"(p.201) to which Amory manages to reply that he'll sleep in them. The next day, still drinking, Amory talks about committing suicide, because there's nothing left to live for. Among his drinking companions is a "Captain Corn, of His Majesty's Foot"(p.202), who suggests that one feels that way when one's health is bad. Once again feet are associated with death or a death-like existence.

The three-week spree ends with Amory writing a "cynical story which featured his father's funeral"(p.209) and his awareness that he "had loved Rosalind as he would never love another living person." There would be other "love-affairs, but of a different sort . . . in which the girl became the mirror of a mood in him"(p.209).

Emerging from his self-imposed purgatory, Amory regains enough composure to retrieve some interest in life. He decides that he wants "people to like his mind again—after a while it might be such a nice place in which to live"(p.211). "There seemed suddenly to be much left in life"(p.212).

In his affair with Eleanor, the girl who is the mirror of a mood in him, the experience of a dwindling orgastic future becomes complete. He loses "a further part of him that nothing could restore"(p.222). Eleanor was "the last time that evil crept close to Amory under the mask of beauty." Together they would watch "an evil moon ride high, for they knew then that they could see the devil in each other"(p.222).

Amory is walking about the countryside reciting poetry and "congratulating Poe for drinking himself to death"(p.223)

when the sky suddenly grows pitch black and a storm breaks out. Scarcely able to see, Amory hears a girl's voice reciting Verlaine. Unalarmed by his approach, she asks if he is St. Christopher or Queen Victoria. Amory shouts that he is Don Juan. She identifies herself as Psyche, Amory's soul. Wondering if she is mad, Amory thinks that Providence has sent this girl, just because she exactly suits his mood. They can stop talking for ten minutes and find "that their minds had followed the same channels"(p.226), and indeed she addresses him as "fellow lunatic"(p.227).

Having identified Eleanor with Amory, Fitzgerald shows us where Amory's changing attitude towards time has lead him. Eleanor states flatly "I have just decided that I don't believe in immortality"(p.228),thus indicating an awareness of her mortality as well as denying eternity and the orgastic future of a heavenly reward.

Reiterating the time as fluid theme and reminiscent of the "Damp Symbolic Interlude" scene earlier at Princeton, in which Amory experienced the "slowed . . . flight of time"(p.54), Eleanor similarly states: "I came out here to get wet—like a wet hen; wet hens always have great clarity of mind"(p.229). They spend an idyllic end-of-summer together reading Swinburne's "Triumph of Time." At one point Amory thinks "How could any one possibly think or worry, or do anything except splash and dive and loll there on the edge of time"(pp.232-33). Later that evening, he feels that "to be there with Eleanor, shadowy and unreal, seemed somehow oddly familiar.

It is during their last night together that Eleanor observes that the sound of horses' hooves is like eternity divided into so many tumps. "I guess that's the only thing that separates horses and clocks from us. Human beings can't go 'tump-tump-tump' without going crazy"(p.237).

Suddenly conscious of time in a way that is very frightening, Eleanor shivers. She admits "I'm thinking about myself—my black old inside self, the real one, with the fundamental honesty that keeps me from being absolutely wicked by making me realize my own sins"(p.237). Just as Amory had sought escape from consciousness into stupidity while being pursued by the devil of Dick Humbird, so too Eleanor proclaims "Rotten, rotten old world . . . Why am I not a stupid—? . . . tied to the sinking ship of future matrimony . . . what's in store for me"(p.237). Dreading the prospect of her future, of what she sees as her likely fate, Eleanor becomes more and more agitated, finally crying out "If there's a God let him strike me—strike me!"(p.239) Then as if to defy death, time, and eternity, she proclaims "Watch! I'm going over the cliff!" and begins riding her horse (clock) at breakneck speed towards the edge of the cliff. Yet at the last second, with a sudden shriek (perhaps of dread, or fundamental honesty), she leaps sideways as the horse plunges to its death. Her shriek, an expression of terror at the reality of death, exposes her awareness of the real condition of existence, and prevents her from plunging into the abyss. When Amory rushes up to her he sees that her eyes are open and she confesses, sobbing

bitterly, that "I've got a crazy streak"(p.240), in other words, an awareness of time. Her symbolic attempt to stop time has only made her aware that she can't. Learning that her horse is dead, she wails "I thought I was going over. I didn't know"(p.240). She has realized the true horror of death, the fear and emptiness that accompanies awareness of mortality.

Aware that he no longer loves her, Amory realizes that as he "had loved himself in Eleanor, so now what he hated was only a mirror"(p.240), which forced him to look at himself. And as they part we are told that "naked souls are poor things ever, and soon he turned homeward and let new lights come in with the sun"(p.240). Amory's realization that Eleanor is but the reflection of his own darkening soul causes him to reject her, in favor of the search for "new lights" hoping to discover some new entrance to Paradise.

Moving another step closer towards acceptance of the conditions of his existence, Amory encounters for the final time the evil that had been personified by Dick Humbird.

The atmosphere of the chapter titled "The Supercilious Sacrifice" is set in the opening scene. Strolling along the boardwalk in Atlantic City, Amory's perception of time is

> lulled by the everlasting surge of changing waves . . . The sea . . . seemed still to whisper of Norse galleys ploughing the water world under raven-figured flags, of the British dreadnoughts, gray bulwarks of civilization steaming up through the fog of one dark July into the North Sea.(p.243)

On this floating "water world" stage along with raven (never-

more?) flags and "dreadnoughts," Amory encounters his former classmate, Alec Connage, Rosalind's brother. Unwittingly, Alec recalls that fatal party of a few years ago, in which Dick Humbird was killed. He invites Amory up to his hotel room to share a quart of bourbon along with Alec's girlfriend. Actually Alec wants Amory to help him cover up his liaison with the girl. Amory begins to feel strange:

> He was in an eddy again, a deep, lethargic gulf, without desire to work or write, love or dissipate. For the first time in his life he rather longed for death to roll over his generation . . . His youth seemed never so vanished as now in the contrast between the utter loneliness of this visit and that riotous, joyful party of four years before. Things that had been the merest commonplaces of his life then, deep sleep, the sense of beauty around him, all desire, had flown away and the gaps they left were filled only with the great listlessness of his disillusion. . . . Tireless passion, fierce jealousy, longing to possess and crush—these alone were left of all his love for Rosalind; these remained to him as payment for the loss of his youth . . . (p.245)

The memory of the loss and the pain associated with the two most painful and dreadful incidents in his life leaves Amory with the feeling "that life had rejected him"(p.245), and he falls asleep calling Rosalind's name.

Suddenly awakened, Amory realizes that Alec and the girl, both in their pajamas, are in his room, attempting to avoid the house detectives (and the Mann Act). Offering to sacrifice himself by taking the blame, as angry voices are barking at the door, Amory is aware of a presence in the room:

> Amory realized that there were other things in the room besides people . . . there hung an

> aura, gossamer as a moonbeam . . . yet a horror, diffusively brooding already over the three of them . . . and over by the window among the stirring curtains stood something else, featureless and indistinguishable, yet strangely familiar. (p.247)

In this atmosphere, Amory has two simultaneous thoughts. He perceives that "love and hate, reward and punishment, had no more to do with it [sacrifice] than the date of the month." Secondly, he recalls a similar sacrifice he'd heard about in college. The innocent roommate in that case had had his entire future shrouded by the shame of the incident, capped by the ingratitude of the true culprit, and had eventually taken his own life. With this in mind, Amory realizes the truth of his sacrifice: "it was like an inheritance of power . . . carrying with it not a guarantee but a responsibility, not a security but an infinite risk"(p.248). Amory is aware of all this "while ulterior to him and speculating upon him were those two breathless, listening forces: the gossamer aura . . . and that familiar thing by the window." Yet for Amory the experience provides "a sudden surge of joy," and with this

> the aura over the bed faded out; the dynamic shadow by the window, that was as near as he could name it, remained for the fraction of the moment and then the breeze seemed to lift it swiftly out of the room. He clinched his hands in quick ecstatic excitement . . . (p.248)

With a sort of existential daring and freedom, Amory is ready to accept responsibility for his fate and his actions, to accept what he will be, perhaps even risking death. Open now to a new aspect of reality that he had heretofore been reluctant to allow, Amory is willing to begin an examination

of himself and his past.

Two days after his "sacrifice," as he scans the paper for a report of his scandalous affair, he sees that there is only a mention of his name in association with entertaining in his hotel room "a lady not his wife"(p.253). Ironically though, directly above is printed a much more painful and personally tragic item, the wedding announcement of his beloved Rosalind. Frightened, and with a "sinking sensation in the pit of his stomach," Amory comes to realize that Rosalind now "was gone, definitely, finally gone"(p.253). Amory can now admit to himself the lingering hope he had had of continuing the past and of regaining his orgastic future, a denial that anything had been lost, that anything was irretrievable.

> Until now he had half unconsciously cherished the hope deep in his heart that some day she would need him and send for him . . . (p.253)

He realizes that the loss has been not in the physical disappearance of what he had treasured, but rather in the loss given up to change, a change in personalities and spirit, a rigor-mortising of the soul.

> Never again could he find even the sombre luxury of wanting her—not this Rosalind, harder, older—nor any beaten, broken woman that his imagination brought to the door of his forties—Amory had wanted her youth, the freah radiance of her mind and body, the stuff that she was selling now once and for all. So far as he was concerned, young Rosalind was dead.(p.253)

From this point, Amory is ready to begin again, to examine himself in the context of the present. He has been

"A fathom deep in sleep," restrained by old desires. Awakened again, he will "clamor lifeward with a cry," ready to seek the "assertive day again"(p.254). In a very present-oriented, existential way, he is ready to "accept all his reactions as a part of him, unchangeable, unmoral"(p.257).

Wandering through New York City, he climbs to the roof of an autobus, "where he rode in solitary state through the thin, persistent rain, stung into alertness by the cool moisture perpetually reborn on his cheek"(p.257). Here again being wet seems to imply some kind of awakening or awareness, some kind of opening up. Allowing his mind to drift, he begins a conversation with himself. He feels that he doesn't want to "commit moral suicide"(p.257). He realizes that he doesn't regret his "lost youth," but rather the loss of the pleasure of losing it again.

> . . . thinking I regretted my lost youth when I only envy the delights of losing it. Youth is like having a big plate of candy. Sentimentalists think they want to be in the pure, simple state they were in before they ate the candy. They don't. They just want the fun of eating it all over again. The matron doesn't want to repeat her girlhood—she wants to repeat her honeymoon. I don't want to repeat my innocence. I want the pleasure of losing it again.(p.258)

But of course he can't. This is the dual aspect of the attitude towards time expressed in the novel. The hero, living in the present, sees himself as riding on the wave of the past, in "apostolic succession"(p.54), through the present, sailing onward into the idealized future. But the present always creates a problem, making him aware of the true nature

of his dreams. The glorious yacht of the future falls into disrepair, and is reduced to a life boat, drifting and destined to sink eventually. The present gives him a "sinking sensation in the pit of his stomach"(p.253), as he senses that perhaps there is nothing beyond existence, that as he changes one essence for another, they all become meaningless since they are only so much coloring on a blank sheet.

Still allowing his mind to drift, Amory gives himself up to his stream of consciousness. He thinks about his mother's death, whether she went to "heaven? . . . probably not—" Was Rosalind like his mother, no, Eleanor was. He thinks of money in terms of existence. "Apartments along here expensive"(p.259), and "Twenty-four dollars meant four hundred and eighty donuts. He could live on it three months and sleep in the park"(p.259). Eventually he comes to think of the decaying body of his past idol. "Wonder what Humbird's body looked like now. If he himself hadn't been bayonet instructor he'd have gone up to line three months sooner, probably been killed." But for three months, he and Humbird would have shared a common fate, and he had wanted to be just like Dick, hadn't he?

With "no distinct destination"(pp.259-60) in mind, Amory follows a "winding, descending sidewalk" into a disorderly shipyard, a place where all drifting objects arrive unless they sink. Like a purgatory for other drifting objects, the shipyard surrounds him with "The hulls of many boats in various stages of repair"(p.260). Through the heavy gloom a man

approaches him asking if he's "Got a pass?" Amory answers "No. Is this private?" a question which the man never really answers, since he only makes "non-committal noises"(p.260), and moves on.

Seated on an overturned boat, Amory continues to look "futilely back at the stream of his life." He realizes that he could allow himself to say that "his own weakness was just the result of circumstances and environment"(p.260), but of course this doesn't ring true.

> Probably more than any concrete vice or failing Amory despised his own personality—he loathed knowing that tomorrow and the thousand days after he would swell pompously at a compliment and sulk at an ill word like a third-rate musician or a first-class actor. He was ashamed of the fact that very simple and honest people usually distrusted him . . . (p.261)

Part of his self-loathing derives from his idea that "he could not be both great and good"(pp.260-61). This is a manifestation of the fear, the voice that whispers to him of the evil that he dreads. That like Dick Humbird, Amory in college "had been an evil influence . . . people . . . had followed him here and there into mental adventures from which he alone rebounded unscathed"(p.261).

This was the uneasy past. To avoid consciousness of the finite limitations of the past, Amory has found that "he could escape from this consuming introspection by thinking of children and the infinite possibilities of children" (p.261), children who are essentially timeless, existing in the infinite present without having to know what's coming,

to dwell upon what's lost, to worry about becoming—children who can just be. Yet as he is soothed with the thought of children he hears "a startled baby awake in a house across the street and lend a tiny whimper to the still night." With "a touch of panic" he wonders:

> whether something in the brooding despair of his mood had made a darkness in its tiny soul. He shivered. What if some day the balance was overturned, and he became a thing that frightened children and crept into rooms in the dark, approached dim communion with thoses phantoms who whispered shadowy secrets to the mad of that dark continent upon the moon.(p.261)

After this Amory fancies "a possible future comment of his own." Admitting that too much thinking is not good, he says "I soon found it made me morbid to think too much about myself"(p.261). But as light-hearted as he might attempt to be, he becomes overwhelmed with the notion of just giving up and surrendering himself to any future, of allowing himself to be pulled in through that door that he had sought earlier in fleeing Dick Humbird's devil. Ready to yield to that voice of evil, Amory feels an "overwhelming desire to let himself go to the devil . . . to sink safely and sensuously out of sight." He sees his future as one in which "he might live a strange litany, delivered from right and wrong and from the hound of heaven and from every God . . . delivered from success and hope and poverty into that long chute of indulgence which led, after all, only to the artificial lake of death"(p.262).

Whereas "Once he had been miraculously able to scent

evil as a horse detects a broken bridge at night"(p.262), his last experience had been to perceive evil as an aura that had disappeared with his own personal suicidal abandon. Had the evil really disappeared or had it taken over his soul? In spite of the horse's instinct to avoid broken bridges in the night, could he, like Eleanor, drive the horse over the edge?

But Amory indicates later on that this is not the case, for "he had escaped from a small enclosure into a great labyrinth"(p.264). He knows that he is "alone." Amory is now one of those people "who through natural clarity or disillusion left the enclosure and sought the labyrinth . . . concerned in the eternal attempt to attach a positive value to life"(p.264). From this existential plateau, Amory prepares himself to enter the multiplicitous future of his existence. With all the appropriate angst and nausea, "In self-reproach and loneliness and disillusion he came to the entrance of the labyrinth"(p.265).

Near the end of the novel, Amory begins walking towards Princeton. It is a cool colorless day, a day of "clear visions"(p.267). Along the way he is given a lift by a well-to-do businessman. The man, almost a portrait of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg later on in The Great Gatsby, is characterized by his goggles and "a great confidence in himself set off against a tremendous boredom with everything around him. . . . he was inclined to stare straight at the back of the chauffeur's head as if speculating steadily but hopelessly some baffling hirsute problem"(p.267). Arguing the benefits and deficits

of socialism and capitalism, Amory claims at one point that when a brainy man gets married, or takes a job, he's "in an enclosed treadmill that hasn't any windows. He's done! Life's got him! . . . He's a spiritually married man"(p.271). Amory later explains that "It is not life that's complicated, it's the struggle to guide and control life"(p.272).

As it turns out, the man is the father of one of Amory's classmates, "the man who in college had borne off the crown that he had aspired to." He had been killed the previous year in France: "What little boys they had been." As present-oriented as he tries to be, there are always the lingerings of memory for Amory: "What ghosts were people with which to work!"(p.279)

Still at the entrance of his labyrinth, Amory is ready to make some conclusions. One is his awareness of his own subjectivity, that his selfishness is "the most living part" of him, and that going beyond this fact rather than avoiding it can bring "balance" into his life (p.280). At twilight Ambry approaches a graveyard, where "On an impulse he considered trying to open the door of a rusty iron vault built into the side of a hill"(p.281). But the door will not open, perhaps indicating that Amory is not ready to become "one of the footfalls"(p.115) that lead to a spiritual, and eventually, a physical death. From his encounter with the grave he wants "to <u>feel</u> 'William Dayfield, 1864.'" But rather than experiencing dread at the prospect of death, he wonders "that graves ever made people consider life in vain. Somehow he could

find nothing hopeless in having lived." Amory wants to extract the essence, the "story," the meaning of an existence that is now betokened only by a grave:

> He fancied that in a hundred years he would like having young people speculate as to whether his eyes were brown or blue, and he hoped quite passionately that his grave would have about it an air of many, many years ago.(p.281)

Of course, this re-intrusive awareness of the past coming and going is what keeps Fitzgerald's heroes from ever being considered truly present-oriented in the existential sense. The intensity of pleasure in losing what there is to lose is too strong to just let it go.

Back at Princeton, Amory can see the yoke of the past that he has presumably shaken loose:

> As an endless dream it went on; the spirit of the past brooding over a new generation, the chosen youth from the muddled, unchastened world, still fed romantically on the mistakes and half-forgotten dreams of dead statesmen and poets. Here was a new generation, shouting the old cries, learning the old creeds, through a revery of long days and nights; destined finally to go out into that dirty gray turmoil to follow love and pride; a new generation dedicated more than the last to the fear of poverty and the worship of success; grown up to find all Gods dead, all wars fought, all faiths in man shaken. . . .
>
> Amory, sorry for them, was still not sorry for himself . . . he was safe now, free from all hysteria—he could accept what was acceptable . . . (p.282)

He seems confident about his future, and yet

> there was ever the pain of memory; the regret for his lost youth—yet the waters of disillusion had left a deposit on his soul, responsibility and a love of life, the faint stirring of old ambitions and unrealized dreams. But—oh, Rosalind! Rosalind! . . . (p.282)

Pyrrhically, he acknowledges "It's all a poor substitute at best," and although he cannot tell why, somehow the struggle was worthwhile. In one last determined proclamation of belief, a whistling in the dark, Amory declares, "I know myself but that is all"(p.282).

This Side of Paradise is Fitzgerald's least pessimistic novel, for it does seem to end on a positive, future-oriented note. At the conclusion, Amory Blaine appears no longer to experience the dread of the future that he had earlier. He feels that he has managed to get a grasp on it through an understanding of his expectations, created from the false values of the previous generation. The future and the present seem malleable, and the conditions of time (death, change, nothingness) seem part of the "acceptable"(p.282). Amory admits to his disillusionment, for it seems to him to be a strength that gives him clarity of vision. Although he claims to know himself, Amory's vision of the future can offer no avenue to a new Paradise, and his self-confidence is suspect. His dreadful future has begun, in his awareness of his heritage of dead Gods, and the spiritual bankruptcy of his own generation. Even though he believes himself free of the tyranny of the treadmill of existence that would lead him to a dreadful future, he does not demonstrate that he has in fact escaped.

Perhaps like Anthony Patch in Fitzgerald's following novel, Amory will decide to do nothing, for there is nothing he can do, and will drift. Subject to the futility that time

awareness brings, Amory will perhaps find himself drifting backwards, remembering a time when Paradise was still close at hand, and the orgastic future still glowed. While Amory hopes to get rid of past values and forge new ones, he cannot divest himself of his own personal past, his remembered orgastic future. His "oh, Rosalind! Rosalind!" betrays him. This exclamation conveys the impression that if Amory's equivalent to Daisy Buchanan should become available, he would be all too ready to let life have him, and become a "spiritually married man." For Amory, like Gatsby, the past will seem imminently recoverable.

CHAPTER III

THE BEAUTIFUL AND DAMNED

"Everybody's youth is a dream, a form of chemical madness."
"How pleasant then to be insane!"

"The Diamond as Big as the Ritz," Babylon Revisited and Other Stories, p.113

In This Side of Paradise the balance of time is tilted heavily towards the future. Amory struggles with his awareness of the disparity between the true nature of the future and his idealized conception. His solution is to insert himself into a kind of existential present, asserting that he knows himself but that is all. Stern points out that "When all the excitement of self-discovery was finished, one of the truths that Amory had found was that there was no gate to paradise. There were only doors either to destructive dissipation and personality or to work and next things."[1] Yet for Amory, disillusioned as he is, the problem is still the future and what he will be, and, as mentioned above, the tug backwards is already present.

In The Beautiful and Damned the characters do not have to wrestle with what they will be but with what they are. Although there are still some traces of the orgastic future, it is quickly giving way to the dreadful. In The Beautiful

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1 Milton R. Stern, p.115.

and Damned there is a further shift in the balance between the receding future and the increasing past. Fitzgerald's second novel displays his horror and fascination with youth and the workings of time. What Fitzgerald understands is that youth and beauty are timeless qualities, but that they are visited upon the individuals who possess them only temporarily, "between two significant glances in a mundane mirror"(p.29), as Beauty is told in a section titled "A Flashback in Paradise."

The damnation of Anthony and Gloria is that they cannot be young forever. For Gloria this lends poignancy to the experience of youth, and gives meaning to her existence as long as she is young, because as long as she is young the world is hers. For Anthony there is not this depth of experience or meaning. He does nothing because there is nothing to do, and he confidently trusts that he'll die before he gets to be forty. The future he is willing to live in is the unrealistic idealized one where he loafs graciously about, living off his inheritance whenever it comes. For Anthony time is actually money, and vice versa, and as he loses the money he thought to own, he is aware of having run out of time as well.

Although he feels that he should do something with his time, Anthony, like Gloria, has no idea of what he ought to do. In fact they are amazed that anybody can do anything, as Gloria points out. The orgastic future is not a future one

works towards but rather a well, a fountain of youth that one bathes in until all the water is gone. As Gloria describes it:

> "Blowing bubbles—that's what we're doing, Anthony and me. And we blew such beautiful ones to-day, and they'll explode and then we'll blow more and more, I guess—bubbles just as big and just as beautiful, until all the soap and water is used up." (p.147)

As it was for Amory, the dreadful future for Anthony is the frightening prospect of doing next things and wasting one's life when there is nothing to do. Although Anthony and Gloria purport to know the true nature of time and the future that makes life meaningless (that is, mutability, change, loss, death), they nevertheless still live in an ideal future of ought-to's and shoulds, and plan what to do once they get the grandfather's money. Their youth exists as long as there is an orgastic future of possibilities.

For Anthony and Gloria this future begins to end once they decide to get married, something which both had firmly declared they would never do. Irrevocably committed to youth and drifting, their sense of loss becomes a profound and frightening experience. Their tragedy, their damnation is that of all youth. It is that they do not possess an unlimited future and that they must know this. The intrusive present, the present that encounters the dreadful future, gives them a sense of loss that makes them unable to accept their receding future and compels them to retreat into the past.

From the outset both Anthony and Gloria display their tendency to regress or remain childlike, Gloria by choice and Anthony by temperament. Gloria knows that the world is hers

as long as she is young and beautiful, for the world will tolerate her immaturity for the pleasure of merely gazing upon her. The world is less tolerant of Anthony, however, demanding of him the pose that the future is so utterly meaningless as to be insignificant, and that he can drift wherever that drifting forces of time take him. As Fitzgerald reminds us at the end of The Great Gatsby, drifting leads back into the past.

> When the novel begins, Anthony, age twenty-five, considers that he would one day accomplish some quiet subtle thing that the elect would deem worthy and, passing on, would join the dimmer stars in a nebulous, indeterminate heaven half-way between death and immortality. Until the time came for this effort he would be Anthony Patch. (p.3)

By the age of eleven, "he had a horror of death"(p.6), and he perceived that "life was a struggle against death, that waited at every corner"(p.7). Until he was fourteen his stamp collection was his greatest happiness. Anthony sees his wealthy, garrulous old grandfather as having "the bad temper of a spoiled child," yet it seems impossible to believe "that he had once been a pink and white baby"(p.14). His grandfather urges him to do something with his life, as everybody "ought to do something . . . accomplish something"(p.15). Anthony shows his interest in the past, telling his grandfather that he plans to write a history. In his grandfather, he sees the sharp contrast between youth and old age, and the paradoxical relationship that time creates between them. Before people are allowed to die, they must first return to their original condition, although they are far from being

children.

Although Anthony is only twenty-five, his awareness of death has robbed him of a modicum of childhood. The good weather of one day causes him to exclaim:

> Makes me feel about ten. I mean it makes me feel as I should have felt when I was ten. Murderous! Oh, God! one minute it's my world, and the next I'm the world's fool. To-day it's my world and everything's easy, easy. Even Nothing is easy!(p.34)

Further on he is told, "After all, Anthony, it's you who are very romantic and young. It's you who are infinitely more susceptible and afraid of your calm being broken"(p.51). Anthony's youthful calm is something he has to work at, in spite of the pleasantness of being young. His fear of death and the future has become an essential part of his character. His unstructured daily existence has made his days into uneasy things, as he is aware that the loss of each day signifies the approach of a dreadful future in which he will be emptied of whatever time he did have, and will be left with nothing to show for it but the empty shell of his body. He will be "empty as an old bottle"(p.56):

> His day, usually a jelly-like creature, a shapeless, spineless thing, had attained Mesozoic structure . . . He dreaded the moment when the backbone of the day should be broken, when he should have met the girl at last, talked to her, and then bowed her laughter out the door . . .
>
> There was a growing lack of color in Anthony's days. He felt it constantly.(p.53)

> It seemed a tragedy to want nothing—and yet he wanted something, something. He knew in flashes what it was—some path of hope to lead him toward what he thought was an imminent and ominous old age.(p.55)

Although Anthony wants desperately to believe in something that will make his old age meaningful, he nevertheless

can only see the future as something hopeless:

> He had run into two men from his class at Harvard, and in contrast to the gray heaviness of their conversation his life assumed color. Both of them were married . . . crabbed by twenty years—then they would be no more than obsolete and broken machines, pseudo-wise and valueless, nursed to an utter senility by the women they had broken.
> Ah, he was more than that . . .(p.55)

"With a stray boyishness," Anthony sees himself as being somehow significant, "a power upon the earth." He will transcend the apparent terrestrial limitations of other men by the "clarity of his mind, its sophistication, its versatile intelligence, all at their maturity and dominated by some purpose yet to be born"(pp.55-56). But Anthony's boyish idealistic hopes for a significant future quickly give way to his true perception of himself:

> Oh, he was a pretentious fool, making careers out of cocktails and meanwhile regretting, weakly and secretly, the collapse of an insufficient and wretched idealism . . . He was empty, it seemed, empty as an old bottle——(p.56)

It is this sense of his own hollowness and emptiness, his sense of wasting and losing time, that attracts him to the "immortal Gloria"(p.97), and later, during their marriage, makes him feel like a guest at a party she's giving.

Gloria is described to Anthony as being "damned attractive." In a chapter entitled "A Flash-Back in Paradise," we are told that Beauty is to be born again as she must every one hundred years, and that the land she must enter is "a land where the rulers have minds like little children"(p.28). Consequently Beauty will be born as a "ragtime kid, a flapper, a jazz-baby, and a baby vamp"(p.29), and her lifetime then

"will be, as always, the interval between two significant glances in a mundane mirror"(p.29). The Beauty that becomes Gloria makes her at once "very young and very old"(p.60). We are informed that she was "suckled until she was three . . . when she could probably have chewed sticks"(p.79). It is as if she were storing up some vital concoction that would allow her to remain young. She knows that the world is hers as long as she is young. Gloria's unwillingness to age is reflected in one of her conversations with Anthony:

> "I wish you'd tell me how old you are."
> "Twenty-two," she said, meeting his eyes gravely.
> "How old did you think?"
> "About eighteen."
> "I'm going to start being that. I don't like being twenty-two. I hate it more than anything in the world."
> "Being twenty-two?"
> "No. Getting old and everything. Getting married."(p.64)

Ironically, Gloria's association of marriage with aging is well-founded, as it is her later marriage that will bring about her encounter with the dreadful future that she hates. Gloria would have aged physically regardless of her marriage, but what it does do is age her spiritually and mentally, since it is a compromise of her basic credo of being young and free. Compromise is the first admission that the orgastic future possibly doesn't exist, and one had better settle for something less. Doing something as mundane as getting married is her first compromise with the future and, for Gloria, is synonymous with getting old.

Although Anthony too indicates his intention not to marry, Gloria's "damned" attractiveness, and his own fear of time rushing by, spark in his soul a desire to attach himself

to the "immortal Gloria"(p.97). Although he tells another girl that it doesn't bother him that he drinks every day, and he doesn't worry about what he'll be at forty, because "I sincerely trust that I won't live that long"(p.87), he nevertheless has an attack of anxiety at the end of the evening.

> He shut the door and coming back into the room stood for a moment lost in thought with the tennis-ball still clasped in his hand. There was one of his lonelinesses coming, one of those times when he walked the streets or sat, aimless and depressed, biting a pencil at his desk. It was a self-absorption with no comfort, a demand for expression with no outlet, a sense of time rushing by, ceaselessly and wastefully—assuaged only by that conviction that there was nothing to waste, because all efforts and attainments were equally valueless.
>
> He thought with emotion—aloud, ejaculative, for he was hurt and confused.
>
> "No idea of getting married, by God!"(p.93)

Lost, and in a panic because of a falling out with Gloria, Anthony becomes a confused and hopelessly wandering creature. "It never occurred to him that he was a passive thing, acted upon by an influence above and beyond Gloria" (p.105). In a section entitled "Magic," we are informed of Anthony's susceptibility to eternal, seductive women. His day begins out of the "unexpected miracle" of the fading night, and "the lingering death of the 1st stars"(p.103). A pencil of sunlight, as if penetrating the dark night of his uneasy soul, fingers its way down his bookcase, touching upon books about women like "Ann the Superwoman, Jenny of the Orient Ballet and Zuleika the Conjurer . . . then down a shelf and into the years, resting pityingly on the over-invoked shades of Helen, Thais, Salome, and Cleopatra"(p.103). Anthony's vulnerability and attraction to femme fatales has become real.

The panicked Anthony realizes how easily Gloria has managed to take over his existence: "By her three minutes of utter unwavering indifference the girl had lifted herself from a high but somehow casual position in his mind, to be instead his complete preoccupation"(p.116). He wanders about the streets of New York aimlessly, unaware in his fear, that "His overcoat was wide open, and the wind was biting in, hard and full of merciless death"(p.117). His drifting leads him into a restaurant where he is startled into awareness, and he reads on the restaurant window Ɛ'ꓤIIꓶ. The inverted CHILD'S seems to signal the start of Anthony's receding future, as well as to indicate the beginning of the drift backwards. About to unite himself with the orgastic future, Gloria, the modern version of his dream women of the past, Anthony is compelled to feel the pain of trying to realize a dream, for dreams are only dreams as long as they never have to compromise themselves by becoming reality. But Anthony's realization of this comes only near the end of the novel, as he approaches complete collapse. He tells Dot, the girl he is about to jilt, that "once I wanted something and got it. It was the only thing I ever wanted badly, Dot. And when I got it it turned to dust in my hands"(p.341). Dreams are mortal too, it seems, and are subject to returning to ashes and dust just like human beings. Nevertheless, if he does not marry Gloria, his life will be a "feeble parody on his own adolescence"(p.119).

Gloria and Anthony are eventually reconciled, and

Anthony is temporarily rejuvenated; "he was young now as he would never be again, and more triumphant than death"(p.126). In spite of his joy, his attitude towards time has begun changing.

> In bed that night with the lights out and the cool room swimming with moonlight, Anthony lay awake and played with every minute of the day like a child playing in turn with each one of a pile of long-wanted Christmas toys.(p.127)

Here again are all the time themes: the night; his environment swimming; and his sense of being like a child. "He was handsome then if never before, bound for one of those immortal moments which come so radiantly that their remembered light is enough to see by for years"(p.128). The intense excitement that Anthony's orgastic future gives him only further underlines the dreadful prospect before him. The radiant light of Paradise only further serves to point out the essential darkness of Anthony's soul. Although the remembered light is enough to see by for years, it will not last forever. It diminishes into the receding future, as the darkness of damnation increases.

With their decision to marry, Anthony and Gloria's orgastic future begins to flee. The day before her wedding, Gloria reviews a line-a-day diary she had kept for the last seven years. The diary begins ironically with, "I'm going to keep a diary for my children"(p.144). The irony, of course, is that although the possibility is much discussed, she and Anthony will never have children, because childbearing will come to mean just another terrestrial, sweaty way for women to hasten their own aging and loss of youth. As will be shown

further on, procreation for Gloria represents a step backwards, horribly enough not back to Paradise, but to a smelly Darwinian cave in which apes dominate the world.

Gloria reads throught the pages of her diary with nostalgia, sighing and remembering. "The past—her past, oh, what a joy! She had been exuberantly happy"(p.145). A few days before her marriage, she writes, "And Anthony—a temporarily passionate lover with wisdom enough to realize when it has flown and that it must fly. And I want to get married to Anthony"(p.147). Gloria's eternal youth is attracted to Anthony's awareness that things must die. For Gloria, that things die gives them poignancy. Visiting General Lee's home during their honeymoon, Gloria is outraged that tourists are allowed there, and that the home is kept up. When Anthony asks why she doesn't want to preserve old things, Gloria states emphatically:

> "But you <u>can't</u>, Anthony. Beautiful things grow to a certain height and then they fail and fade off, breathing out memories as they decay. And just as any period decays in our minds, the things of that period should decay too, and in that way they're preserved for a while in the few hearts like mine that react to them. . . .
> . . . Would you value your Keats letter if the signature was traced over to make it last longer? It's just because I love the past that I want this house to look back on its glamourous moment of youth and beauty . . . But they've made it into a blondined, rouged-up old woman of sixty. . . . How many of these —these <u>animals</u> . . . get anything from this, for all the histories and guide-books and restorations in existence? . . . There's no beauty without poignancy and there's no poignancy without the feeling that it's going, men, names, books, houses—bound for dust—mortal——"(pp.166-67)

As if in a parody of the poignancy Gloria is seeking,

"A small boy appeared beside them and, swinging a handful of banana-peels, flung them valiantly in the direction of the Potomac"(p.167). Previous to their visit, they had been to a zoo, where Gloria had become extremely angry with the people and the place itself. "The Zoo, it seemed, smelt of monkeys. . . . Gloria called down the curse of Heaven upon monkeys, including in her malevolence all the passengers of the bus and their perspiring offspring who had hied themselves monkeyward"(p.166). The small boy parodies America's past, as an apish George Washington who throws banana-peels rather than a silver dollar, and also indicates the devolution of mankind. Gloria invokes heaven down upon a mankind that seems to be regressing into monkeys. For Gloria the past is significant because it is part of her that can never be again. Yet just as monkeys seem to be taking over once again, so too her memories seem doomed to be overrun by ape-like mimics.

Later on, during the feverish illness that precipitates the loss of her beauty, Gloria speaks again about the monkeys that are overtaking the earth. "Millions of people . . . swarming like rats, chattering like apes, smelling like all hell . . . monkeys!"(p.394) Once again the human monkeys are given an extraterrestrial significance. The monkeys smell like hell, which is offensive to Gloria who was born in Paradise. In this same way procreation for Gloria is the vulgar expression of something animal in humans. Her view is that human offspring resemble monkeys, although her own childhood is definitely one linked to Paradise, rather than to a jungle or the modern equivalent, a zoo.

Gloria's seriousness about Anthony evolves from her belief that she and Anthony are "twins" and that "two souls are sometimes created together and—in love before they're born" (p.131). Consequently her union with Anthony is not so much one of two adults coupling, but rather, one of two babies sharing a common womb. Unfortunately for Gloria, although they both have a sense of the death of things, for Anthony this death only makes things dreadful rather than poignant, and like the disillusioned Gatsby who realizes what a grotesque thing a rose is, Anthony's sense of the impending loss is only life-sapping.

As Gloria continues to read her diary, she reflects upon her upcoming marriage, thinking:

> "What grubworms women are to crawl on their bellies through colorless marriages! . . . Mine is going to be outstanding. . . . I refuse to dedicate my life to posterity. Surely one owes as much to the current generation as to one's unwanted children. What a fate —to grow rotund and unseemly, to lose my self-love, to think in terms of milk, oatmeal, nurse, diapers. . . . Dear dream children, how much more beautiful you are, dazzling little creatures who flutter (all dream children must flutter) on golden, golden wings—— Such children, however, poor babies, have little in common with the wedded state."(p.147)

For Gloria then, children should be winged little angels born out of the heaven in which she was created. The harsh reality of grown-ups and the wedded state exclude this kind of divine birth, for people (at least those who have lost the orgastic future) are really closer to animals. Just as Dick Humbird in This Side of Paradise dies as an animal dies, so too humans must be born like animals are born.

For Gloria, the wedded future will be one of "blowing

bubbles . . . they'll explode and then we'll blow more and more . . . until all the soap and water is used up"(p.147). This being the last entry in her diary, Gloria's eyes wander up the page, only to read the record of her first kiss seven years previously:

> She seemed to remember something one of them had said that day and yet she could not remember. Her tears came faster, until she could scarcely see the page. She was crying, she told herself, because she could remember only the rain and the wet flowers in the yard and the smell of the damp grass.(p.148)

As if suddenly aware of the loss of part of her youth, of part of herself, Gloria "drew three parallel lines beneath the last entry. Then she printed FINIS in large capitals" (p.148). With a vision of impending loss and finality, Gloria understands that her life as a jazz-baby is about to end, as she becomes the wife she had vowed never to be. If she can become a wife, what is to prevent her from becoming one of those grubworm women she detests?

For Anthony the impending marriage has its own terrestrial existential terror. Snapping out the lights, he lies in bed reflecting that "the young years behind him, hollow and colorful, had been lived in facile and vacilllating cynicism upon the recorded emotions of men long dust"(p.148). He realizes that the union of his soul with Gloria had given his life "fire and freshness"(p.148). Through an open window "from the night . . . there came persistently, that evanescent and dissolving sound—something the city was tossing up and calling back again, like a child playing with a ball"(pp.148-49). The sound said that "life would be beautiful as a story,

promising happiness—and by that promise giving it"(p.149). It should be noted here that it is not the happiness itself that makes life beautiful but mostly the promise. Without the promises, the possibilities, the dreams, the illusions, or the orgastic future, there is neither anything to live for, nor anything to perpetuate.

But then a new sound separates itself from the tender crying of the night:

> It was . . . the noise of a woman's laughter. It began low, incessant and whining . . . and then it grew in volume and became hysterical . . . Then it sank, receded, only to rise again and include words —a coarse joke . . . It would break off . . . then begin again—interminably; at first annoying, then strangely terrible. . . . It had reached a high point, tensed and stifled, almost the quality of a scream—then it ceased and left behind it a silence empty and menacing . . . He found himself upset and shaken. Try as he might to strangle his reaction, some animal quality in that unrestrained laughter had grasped at his imagination, and for the first time in four months aroused his old aversion and horror toward all the business of life. . . . Life was that sound out there, that ghastly reiterated female sound.(pp.149-50)

Not even the wedding day itself produces any of the intense excitement Anthony had hoped for. "He tried to recapture that ecstatic sensation of ten weeks before. All these emotions eluded him . . . it was all one gigantic aftermath"(p.155). He spends the ceremony staring at the clergyman's gold teeth.

For Gloria the proceedings are much more exciting and significant:

> She was beyond all conscious perceptions. Only a sense, colored with delirious wild excitement, that the ultimately important was happening—and a trust, fierce and passionate, burning in her like

> a prayer, that in a moment she would be forever and securely safe.(p.155)

But within half a year:

> The breathless idyl left them, fled on to other lovers; they looked around one day and it was gone, how they scarcely knew. . . .
> The idyl passed, bearing with it its extortion of youth. . . . But, knowing they had had the best of love, they clung to what remained.(p.156)

The state of marriage rapidly brings out their child-like and regressive traits. Perplexed by "the stupendous problem of their future"(p.170), Gloria wishes that "somebody'd take care of us"(p.171). In bed at night, Anthony observes that coming into Gloria's arms means arranging himself "as nearly as possible as a sort of three-sided crib for her luxurious ease"(p.158). Yet Anthony himself is still insomniac, for he's "as nervous as the devil"(p.159). Gloria displays a growing sentimental attachment to the past, and a sense of loss as she laments:

> "Our two little beds here—side by side—they'll be always waiting for us, and we're never coming back to 'em any more. . . . Everywhere we go and move on and change, something's lost—something's left behind. You can't ever quite repeat anything . . . "(pp.168-69)

Later on Anthony finds Gloria "asleep on one of the beds, her arm curled about a black object . . . Coming closer he found it was one of his shoes, not a particularly new one, nor a clean one"(p.169). Here again, as in This Side of Paradise, a shoe is employed as a symbol of transiency and loss.

The unpleasant loss of illusion is a further characteristic of Anthony and Gloria's first year of marriage. The narrator reminds us that "At thirty an organ-grinder is a more

or less moth-eaten man who grinds an organ—and once he was an organ-grinder!"(p.169) When the Patches move into their gray house, they are at that stage "when the organ-grinder was slowly undergoing his inevitable metamorphosis. She was twenty-three; he was twenty-six"(p.170).

During their first year of marriage Anthony and Gloria acquire an automobile and a gray house, both of which become important symbols of their marriage and their subjection to the devouring aspects of time. Looking for a house to rent, Anthony and Gloria wander around "like bewildered babes in the wood"(p.173). They drive about in their new car, which Gloria conducts impatiently as if it were a extension of her own body. Although she insists that she has been driving since she was fourteen, her driving hasn't apparently improved any, for she is a driver of "infinite carelessness"(p.175). Because the car doesn't seem to deliver as much as she expects of her own physical being, Gloria accuses the car of being too old in spirit to "go over thirty-five"(p.176). Eventually Gloria manages to rip the transmission out of the auto by driving over a fire-hydrant. Significantly, it is this "accident" that leads to the discovery of the gray house. The real-estate agent's suspicious inquiry as to how they discovered the house is met with the explanation that "we broke down" (p.178).

The gray house has its own ancient and slightly sinister history:

> The gray house had been there when women who kept cats were probably witches, when Paul Revere

> made false teeth in Boston . . . when our ancestors were gloriously deserting Washington in droves. Since those days the house had been bolstered up in a feeble corner, considerably repartitioned and newly plastered inside . . . (p.177)

The gray house, then, is ironically similar to General Lee's. That Gloria should take up residence in this place signifies a further compromise for her. Nevertheless, the house is a perfect place for Anthony to "work" on his history.

In this home Anthony and Gloria discuss having a baby, but visiting a dozen friends "who all seemed in different stages of having babies . . . bored her to the point of nervous distraction" (p.185). It is as if having children would be an admission of their own aging, their adultness. They are unlikely to have children since they are still like children themselves. Noises in the night frighten them, and they imagine all sorts of threatening forms lurking in the darkness:

> The desperate squeakings about the old house on windy nights that to Anthony were burglars with revolvers . . . represented to Gloria the auras, evil and restive, of dead generations . . . One night, because of two swift bangs downstairs . . . they lay awake nearly until dawn asking each other examination-paper questions about the history of the world.(p.187)

Like school children, they relieve their fears and anxieties by asking each other predictable questions about a knowable past. The certainty of truths already known is somehow soothing.

Over a period of time, the gray house begins to have another kind of history, one that records the insignificant coming and going of their mundane lives. Gloria's bedroom

seems to say to her:

> "Ah, my beautiful young lady, yours is not the first daintiness and delicacy that has faded here under the summer suns . . . generations of unloved women have adorned themselves by that glass for rustic lovers who paid no heed. . . . Youth has come into this room in palest blue and left it in the gray cerements of despair, and through long nights many girls have lain awake where that bed stands pouring out waves of misery into the darkness."(p.234)

The history of the gray house not only tells of the past but predicts its repetition, in the transiency of human joy and love, and the certainty of pain and heartbreak.

For Gloria the fear of aging becomes a real thing as she turns twenty-four. "Six years to thirty!"(p.192). An incident at a train depot signals further loss for Gloria. We are told that "horror leered out at Gloria . . . and frightened her bright soul back half a generation . . . faded back into that impenetrable darkness whence it had come—taking relentlessly its modicum of youth"(p.195). The incident involves a drunken Anthony humiliating her at the train station, causing her to invoke "words older than the Book of Genesis"(p.199), language from pre-Paradise. This experience leaves her "no longer a proud Gloria"(p.201). Yet the next day, when remorse causes Anthony to kneel down by her bed and cry "like a little boy," Gloria is willing to forgive him, but "she was aware even then that she would forget in time and that it is the manner of life seldom to strike but always to wear away. . . . If there was triumph some darker force than theirs possessed it, possessed the knowledge and the victory"(p.202).

At this point in their marriage, Gloria learns "that she

was probably with child"(p.203). Having children seems unbearable. Gloria wails "And this body of mine . . . to have it grow ugly and shapeless? It's simply intolerable. Oh Anthony, I'm not afraid of the pain"(p.203). She admits, "I thought I'd have a child some time. But not now"(p.204). Aware that she is getting older, and sensitive to the increasing darkness of the dreadful future ahead, Gloria pleads with Anthony to "Turn on the lights . . . These days seem so short—June seemed—to—have—longer days when I was a little girl"(p.204). Although never explicitly stated, the resolution of Gloria's pregnancy seems to be an abortion. In a voice that "hung like incense on the air"(p.205), Gloria says that she will go visit a friend in the city, while Anthony will go see his grandfather, perhaps to get some extra money. A child never materializes.

Gloria's rejection of her prospective child is an admission of her growing awareness of a dreadful future. She knows that the cherubic dream children that she had written about in her diary (p.147) belonged to an orgastic future that had been consistently fading along with the dwindling light of Paradise, and earthly children seem to her more like monkeys than angels. Gloria's abortion is a further denial of the possibility of a hopeful future.

After a drunken spree, Anthony asks what time it is, but Gloria can imagine no reason why she should be expected to know the time. Anthony then mutters that he feels "like the devil! . . . Bring on your grim reaper!"(p.220) After

their next spree, they realize that they have drunkenly renewed the lease on the gray house that has come to represent a personal hell for them, the symbol of their deteriorating youth and marriage. Horrified, they feel that

> for eternity, they had built themselves a prison. It seemed to strike at the last roots of their stability. . . . they went back to the house that they now knew heeded neither youth nor love—only those austere and incommunicable memories that they could never share. (p.233)

Their sense of eternal imprisonment or damnation prepares the way for the gray house's complete transformation into a hellish sort of time machine. The house becomes the setting for an infernal drinking party, presided over by its own figurative Satan in the person of a mysterious character known as Joe Hull.

Anthony's friends, Dick and Maury, show up at the house with a small, stocky man of thirty-five, whom they introduce as Joe Hull. Hull is described as being "a prince" and as having "weird-looking clothes"(p.237). When Maury says he's known him all his life, Anthony remarks "The devil you have!"(p.237). Clearly Joe Hull is intended to be another Dick Humbird figure, and he also resembles the paunchy derelict that is Anthony by the end of the novel. Stern has indicated that Hull's name suggests Hell, and there is also the possible suggestion of the word "skull," but just as appropriate is its literal meaning. If Joe Hull resembles the Anthony of the dreadful future, he can be the hull, the hollow shell of a man,

afloat, and still drifting, while being borne back into the past. Like the demonic phantom of Dick Humbird, Joe Hull is wearing soft shoes that look like gloves, and one "can see his toes right through them"(p.238). Like Humbird, Joe Hull represents some dreadful foreshadowing of the future, and the terrible prospect of some oncoming hell that is to be enacted under his satanic, supervising presence. Even the Patches' familiar friends seem unsettlingly different. "—Was this Maury? thought Gloria"(p.239). The theme song of the evening will be

> "The—pan-ic—has—come—over us,
> So ha-a-as—the moral decline!"(p.238)

When Hull attempts to dance with Gloria she is filled with "intolerable disgust"(p.240), and she struggles to free herself of him until he lets her fall. Suddenly the room adopts a hell-like atmosphere "full of men and smoke"(p.241). As if in a state of eternal damnation, "the room was staggering in grotesque fourth-dimensional gyrations through intersecting planes of hazy blue"(p.241).

Outside, a storm has come up "amazingly" and Gloria's uneasiness makes her want to leave the party:

> She said good night but no one had heard or heeded her. It seemed for an instant as though something had looked down over the head of the banister, but she could not have gone back into the living-room —better madness than the madness of that clamor.(p.241)

Lying upstairs, conscious of the storm outside, she becomes aware of the dripping of raindrops, like the ticking of a clock:

> Drip! Drip! Drip! The sound was not unpleasant —like spring, like a cool rain of her childhood . . . So cool, so clear and clean—and her mother there at the centre of the world, at the centre of the rain, safe and dry and strong. She wanted her mother now, and her mother was dead, beyond sight and touch forever. . . .
>
> She became rigid. Some one had come to the door and was standing regarding her, very quiet except for a slight swaying motion. . . . There was no sound anywhere, only a great persuasive silence— even the dripping had ceased . . . only this figure, swaying, swaying . . .
>
> The minute or succession of minutes prolonged itself interminably, and a swimming blur began to form before her eyes, which tried with childish persistence to pierce the gloom . . . In another instant it seemed that some unimaginable force would shatter her out of existence . . . and then the figure in the doorway—it was Hull, she saw, Hull—turned deliberately and, still slightly swaying, moved back and off, as if absorbed into that incomprehensible light that had given him dimension.(pp.242-43)

In this passage, all the important themes are present: the fluid time symbols (dripping rain, swimming blur); the fear of death; the hope of rescue from the dreadful future of dying by retreating into childhood as a way of piercing the gloom. Hull certainly represents death here ("some unimaginable force would shatter her out of existence"), and it seems significant that even the possibility of retreat is blocked by the fact of her mother's death. Death is when time ceases to be, when there is no longer any future, dreadful or orgastic. The only time indicated in this passage is the time that death possesses, suggested by the pendulum-like swaying of Hull.

She flees the house "in a panic"(p.243): the "clocklike tick of the rails"(p.246) as she approaches a train station signals the resumption of time for Gloria. Nevertheless,

when she hears her name being called by Anthony, she reacts "like a startled child"(p.247). Explaining why she had left the house, Gloria says "I think I'd gotten sort of crazy by that time"(p.248). Her flight takes her to the train station at Redgate, the same train station at which she had invoked words "older than Genesis." The name "Redgate" is suggestive of the gates to Hell, but in this incident, Gloria's flight to Redgate would seem to indicate her wish to leave Hell rather than enter it.

The symposium that follows takes place at this train station. When the Patches' two friends, Maury and Dick, arrive, they mention that they are "damned" if they know how they got there, and explain that Hull is no longer there because he has "passed out"(p.249).

The atmosphere again is one of darkness, as the four faces of the group are "grotesque and unfamiliar"(p.250). Maury, perching himself upon the roof of a shed, is a "shadowy and fantastic gargoyle"(p.251). It is from here that Maury, Anthony's philosophical brother, will deliver his sermon as to the meaninglessness of life, but not before he is able to link the paradise-hell paradox of self-destructive drinking with the supposedly eternal, life-saving message of religion. He observes that a billboard which proclaims that "Jesus Christ is God" is placed next to one that asserts with equal certainty that "Gunter's Whiskey is Good"(p.251). The association is in that either both provide a form of salvation, or neither do. In either

case, they carry the same message.

Maury's sermon comes under the heading of "the story of my education." With the billboards in mind, Maury begins: "as an infant I prayed. I stored up prayers against future wickedness. . . . I prayed immediately after all crimes until eventually prayer and crime became indistinguishable to me"(p.252). As he grew up, "the beauty of succulent illusions fell away"(p.253):

> "I reached maturity under the impression that I was gathering the experience to order my life for happiness. . . . Experience is not worth the getting. . . . So I wrapped myself in what I thought was my invulnerable scepticism and decided that my education was complete. But it was too late. Protect myself as I might by making no new ties with tragic and predestined humanity, I was lost with the rest. I had traded the fight against love for the fight against loneliness, the fight against life for the fight against death."(p.254)

Maury further states that he was "born tired" and that his life is spent in waiting "for the eternal generality that seems to lie just beyond every argument and every speculation"(p.256). The eternal generality is, of course, death. Maury's education is the disillusioning one that understands that there is neither anything to strive for, nor anything to feel, because all effort is wiped out by death. The "immortal Gloria" contributes to this discussion, adding in "melancholy agreement,":There's only one lesson to be learned from life . . . that there's no lesson to be learned from life"(p.255).

In the approaching "strangeness of the brightening day" (p.258), Maury concludes his story, noting:

> But my high-balls are dead and the night's almost over, and soon there'll be an awful jabbering going on everywhere, in the trees and the houses . . . and there'll be a great running up and down upon the earth for a few hours—(p.258)

Like Gloria, Maury sees the earth as being overrun by monkey-like beings, "jabbering . . . in the trees."

Anthony, noting Gloria's far-sighted detachment in falling asleep, falls asleep as well:

> Only Maury Noble remained awake . . . He was wondering at the unreality of ideas, at the fading radiance of existence, and at the little absorptions that were creeping avidly into his life, like rats into a ruined house. . . . In the strangeness of the brightening day it seemed presumptuous that with this feeble, broken instrument of his mind he had ever tried to think. (pp.259-60)

Just as hellish as the night, the day begins with "the sun, letting down great glowing masses of heat." Like a fiery dragon

> there was life, active and snarling, moving about them like a fly swarm—the dark pants of smoke from the engine . . . Confusedly Maury saw eyes in the milk train staring curiously up at him [Dr. T. J. Eckleburg] . . . and the three men, pale as ghosts, were standing alone upon the platform while a grimy coal-heaver went down the road on top of a motor truck, carolling hoarsely [Joe Hull had a husky voice] at the summer morning. (p.260)

The Patches deteriorate rapidly from this point on. Anthony, in the midst of his subsequent bacchanalia, is mortified by the appearance of his grandfather who had just that morning contributed a large amount of money to the cause of Prohibition. His arrival occurs as "Bedlam creeps screaming out of the bottles"(p.273). Old Patch disinherits Anthony and this incident

is the precipitating factor in Anthony and Gloria's decline. The loss of old Adam (Paradise!) Patch's money represents the complete collapse of Anthony's future:

> . . . they had speculated upon future happiness —how they were to travel . . . returning eventually to a gorgeous estate and possible idyllic children, then . . . accomplish, for a while, beautiful and important things, until finally as a white-haired (beautifully, silkily, white-haired) couple they were to loll about in serene glory . . . These times were to begin "when we get our money"; it was on such dreams rather than on any satisfaction with their increasingly irregular, increasingly dissipated life that their hope rested.(p.277)

In spite of their growing awareness of a dreadful future, the inheritance had represented for Anthony and Gloria the last vestiges of the orgastic, ideal future.

Eventually, Anthony and Gloria are able to move out of the gray house. Gloria curses the house, which, like time, has devoured so much of their youth. Their move to New York finds them in the Bronx, a descent typical of their dim and receding future. The pathos of their present lives leads Anthony to reflect upon the past:

> He found himself remembering how on one summer morning they two had started out from New York in search of happiness. They had never expected to find it, perhaps, yet in itself that quest had been happier than anything he had expected forevermore. . . . There was no rest, no quiet. He had been futile in longing to drift and dream; no one drifted except to maelstroms, no one dreamed, without his dreams becoming fantastic nightmares of indecision and regret.(p.282)

The move into the Bronx apartment further characterizes an increasingly hopeless and deteriorating existence. "After the sureties of youth there sets in a period of intense and

intolerable complexity"(p.283) wherein "it has begun to appear that we can learn nothing from the past with which to face the future"(p.284). For the twenty-nine-year-old Anthony, the prospect of thinking seems dreadful. Consciousness implies knowledge of how things are and will be; that the future moves towards the total disintegration of youth and dreams, into the dust and ashes of mortality. So Anthony is "inclined to close his mind to many things, to avoid prying deeply into the motives and first causes, and mostly to long passionately for security from the world and from himself"(pp.284-85).

Their new apartment is tarnished by their continued deterioration and self-destructive behaviour:

> There was the odor of tobacco always—both of them smoked incessantly; it was in their clothes, their blankets, the curtains, and the ash-littered carpets. Added to this was the wretched aura of stale wine, with its inevitable suggestion of beauty gone foul and revelry remembered in disgust. . . . There had been many parties—people broke things; people became sick in Gloria's bathroom; people spilled wine; people made unbelievable messes of the kitchenette.
>
> These things were a regular part of their existence. Despite the resolutions of many Mondays it was tacitly understood as the week-end approached that it should be observed with some sort of unholy excitement.(pp.295-96)

It seems ironic that

> Outwardly they showed no signs of deterioration. Gloria at twenty-six was still the Gloria of twenty; her complexion a fresh damp setting for her candid eyes; her hair still a childish glory . . . And for his part Anthony had rather gained than lost in appearance; his face had taken on a certain intangible air of tragedy . . . (p.297)

Anthony's efforts to write (under the nom de plume of Gilles de Sade) only present him with a collection of rejection

slips, "headstones for the packages that he would find lying like dead bodies at his door"(p.303).

In spite of the increasingly dreadful nature of their situation, Gloria tries to stay true to her credo of remaining young as long as she possibly can:

> "Everything I do is in accordance with my ideas: to use every minute of these years, when I'm young, in having the best time I possibly can."
> "How about after that?"
> "After that I won't care."
> "Yes, you will."
> "Well, I may—but I won't be able to do anything about it. And I'll have had my good time."
> "You'll be the same then. After a fashion, we have had our good time, raised the devil, and we're in the state of paying for it."(pp.304-305)

The good times at any cost, which involve raising the devil, also indicate that the price to be paid will be very dear. Most likely the price will be Hell and eternal damnation.

Soon after their third anniversary, Anthony is drafted. Whether hopeful or despairing, they seem pathetic:

> Anthony and Gloria talked of the things they were to do when the money was theirs . . . when they would "agree on things again," for both of them looked forward to a time when love, springing like the phoenix from its own ashes, should be born again in its mysterious and unfathomable haunts.
> He was drafted early in the fall . . . It was all very purposeless and sad when Anthony told Gloria one night that he wanted, above all things, to be killed.(p.308)

During his military duty Anthony becomes involved with a young woman named Dot. By the end of the book, Dot will be the punctuating factor, the ultimate "There!", that will complete the total collapse of Anthony's sanity and stability. To Dot, Anthony reveals the total disillusionment he feels

about life and dreams. He tells her:

> "Dot . . . you'll forget. Things are sweeter when they're lost. I know—because once I wanted something and got it. It was the only thing I ever wanted badly, Dot. And when I got it it turned to dust in my hands." (p.341)

Sentenced to the guard house for breaking army regulations once too often, Anthony has the first prescience of his oncoming crack-up.

> Early in his confinement the conviction took root in him that he was going mad. It was as though there were a quantity of dark yet vivid personalities in his mind . . . held in check by a little monitor, who sat aloft somewhere and looked on. The thing that worried him was that the monitor was sick, and holding out with difficulty. Should he give up, should he falter for a moment, out would rush these intolerable things—only Anthony could know what a state of blackness there would be if the worst of him could roam his consciousness unchecked. (p.350)

Blackness, which can magically allow time to stand still, can equally be the occasion of black magic when it represents an undefinable horror or dread. Anthony worries about the increasing lack of colour in his days, but for Fitzgerald night is the true atmosphere of the soul. We are reminded in <u>This Side of Paradise</u> that souls are like voices in the dark, solitary, sightless voices, looking for something, perhaps the "green light." Yet also "In Darkness" the satanic likeness of Joe Hull appears. At the same time as awareness of death underlines the process of life, the dreadful evil of existence is alleviated by the glowing memory of the orgastic future, when Paradise guided one's

path with its all-too-soon diminishing light. As the light of Paradise slips away from him, Anthony is aware only of how very black the blackness will be. When the light at the far end of the tunnel disappears the only way to regain the light is to return up the tunnel, back to better days. For Anthony, only the schoolboy "monitor" in his mind prevents him from running back up the tunnel.

For Gloria, the disintegrating process of aging is consistent with her philosophy and, not surprisingly, adds poignancy to her sense of loss, as opposed to Anthony's fear-ridden existence. She writes to Anthony that

> whatever has happened or will happen to us—is like begging for mercy from a storm, Anthony; it's like growing old.(p.360)

> Very few of the people who accentuate the futility of life remark the futility of themselves. Perhaps they think that in proclaiming the evil of living they somehow salvage their own worth from the ruin —but they don't, even you and I.(p.361)

The ever-recurring problem of having children or not is decided finally as Gloria admits:

> She knew that in her breast she had never wanted children. The reality, the earthiness, the intolerable sentiment of child-bearing, the menace to her beauty—had appalled her. . . . Her sentimentality could cling fiercely to her own illusions, but her ironic soul whispered that motherhood was also the privilege of the female baboon. So her dreams were of ghostly children only—the early, the perfect symbols of her early and perfect love for Anthony.(pp.392-93)

Here again the vulgar earthiness of child-bearing is likened to the Darwinian relationship of monkeys and men, not of Paradise, or the orgastic future. The children she would have

are the "ghostly children" of her dreams, children that she and Anthony had once resembled.

Trying to salvage some of the dreams of her earlier self, Gloria finally decides that she will go into the movies. But before she can have her screen test, she becomes ill and in her feverish dreams she seeks an earlier, Paradisical, child-self.

> In the feverish perambulations of her mind she prowled through a house of bleak unlighted rooms hunting for her mother. All she wanted was to be a little girl, to be efficiently taken care of by some yielding yet superior power, stupider and steadier than herself. It seemed that the only lover she had ever wanted was a lover in a dream.(p.394)

Dreading the experience of being lost and alone, Gloria's mind wanders through the "unlighted rooms" of her adult, aging self. To escape the dreadful vista of her darkening future, Gloria hopes to retreat into the more secure, protective shelter of her childhood and her mother's care.

When she is eventually scheduled for a screen test it is in a "Percy B. Debris production." Just before the test, in self-evaluation she feels that "her mirror had given her . . . . much the same account as ever"(p.397), and an old friend, Bloeckman, tells her that she had not changed a bit in three years. Nervously awaiting the results of the test (the test of time?), Gloria, staring at her watch, observes that "she should have a new watch" (p.402). When the results finally arrive she is told that the director had a "younger woman" in mind, but that there

is a role for "a very haughty rich widow"(p.403), a foreshadowing of her eventual fate. It is her twenty-ninth birthday, and Gloria feels that the world is "melting away before her eyes"(p.403). Examining her face in the mirror, the second "significant glance in a mundane mirror," Gloria

> strained to see until she could feel the flesh on her temples pull forward. Yes—the cheeks were ever so faintly thin, the corners of the eyes were lined with tiny wrinkles. The eyes were different. Why, they were different! . . . And then suddenly she knew how tired her eyes were.
>
> "Oh, my pretty face," she whispered, passionately grieving. "Oh, my pretty face! Oh, I don't want to live without my pretty face! Oh, what's happened?"
>
> Then she slid toward the mirror and, as in the test, sprawled face downward upon the floor—and lay there sobbing. It was the first awkward movement she had ever made.(p.404)

Her new, more dreadful existence makes Gloria conscious that

> she was miserable . . . this existence without hope, without happiness, oppressed her, and she kept shaking her head from side to side, her mouth drawn down tremulously in the corners, as though she were denying an assertion made by someone, somewhere. She did not know that this gesture of hers was years older than history, that, for a hundred generations of men, intolerable and persistent grief has offered that gesture . . . to something more profound, more powerful than the God made in the image of man, and before which that God, did he exist, would be equally impotent. It is a truth set at the heart of tragedy that this force never explains, never answers—this force intangible as air, more definite than death.(p.414)

For Anthony, alcohol becomes an undeniable necessity, restoring to him the youthful sense of magic that an earlier Anthony had still been able to believe in:

> . . . he hated to be sober. It made him conscious of the people around him . . . As he grew older . . . things faded—after that there was wine.
>
> There was a kindliness about intoxication—there was that indescribable gloss and glamour it gave, like the memories of ephemeral and faded evenings. After a few highballs there was magic . . .
>
> . . . The fruit of youth or of the grape, the transitory magic of the brief passage from darkness to darkness—the old illusion that truth and beauty were in some way entwined.(p.417)

Alcohol and regression to pleasurable younger days, days of magic, are irrevocably intertwined for the disintegrating Anthony.

While Gloria is being bent into the "grotesque similitude of a housewife," Anthony sometimes admits that he is "drinking a little too much"(p.424). Needing money to drink, Anthony hopes to hock the past, for he is unable to borrow anything on the dwindling reserves of his bank account or his future. He says of a once-treasured possession, "I wish I'd sold that Keats letter like I started to last week"(p.427). Pathetically, he decides to hock his watch, because "I'ts been hocked before"(p.429). Willing to pawn his past time, a drunken Anthony gets beaten up by a fellow ironically characterized as a Good Samaritan before he reaches a pawn shop. Awakening after his beating, "he was curiously anxious to know the time, but he reached for his watch, only to find the pocket empty"(p.441). Time had finally run out on Anthony. Declaring "What a night!" he hears from down the street, just as he did the night before his wedding, "the unmistakable sound of ironic laughter. And on his torn and bleeding lips it was like

a pitiful retching of the soul"(p.441).

With one thin prospect of regaining the orgastic, paradisical future Anthony hopes that the final verdict regarding his grandfather's money will be in his favour. Although the inheritance "had grown enormously unreal to them, remote and uncertain as heaven"(p.389), Anthony feels that "if the verdict was in their favor it meant Italy. . . . a land where the intolerable anxieties of life would fall away"(p.443).

The day of the verdict, Dot, the woman from the army camp, disastrously appears at Anthony's apartment, confessing her love for him. On the point of madness, Anthony shrieks that he'll kill her. Unintimidated, the love-sick Dot re-states her love for him until finally, for Anthony

> . . . a thick, impenetrable darkness came down upon him and blotted out thought, rage, and madness together—with almost a tangible snapping sound the face of the world changed before his eyes.(p.446)

When Gloria and her cousin Dick return from the courts to tell Anthony that he's now worth thirty million they find him "sitting in a patch of sunshine" with "his three big stamp books"(p.446). These stamps had been his greatest joy up to the age of fourteen. Astonished, Dick asks Anthony if he is "going back to childhood? Don't you realize you've won the suit? They've reversed the decision of the lower courts"(p.447). But Anthony himself has already made a decision of reversal and, "like a pert child", he tells them to leave "Or else I'll tell my grandfather." With this, "He held

up a handful of stamps and let them come drifting down about him like leaves . . . stamps of England and Ecuador, Venezuela and Spain—Italy . . . (p.447). Just as the leaves around Gatsby's body symbolized both physical death, and the death of his dream, so too Anthony's shower of leaf-like stamps represents the end of his orgastic future and the death of his drifting spirit. The inheritance is meaningless to the damned Anthony. Time is no longer money, the inheritance is no longer the future. Time is now the past.

The novel ends with the Patches taking an ocean voyage. Anthony, like a baby in a carriage, is a "bundled figure seated in a wheelchair"(p.447). As a "general might look back upon a successful campaign," Anthony believes that everyone "had tried to penalize him for the mistakes of his youth. . . . his very craving for romance had been punished, his friends had deserted him—even Gloria had turned against him. He had been alone, alone—facing it all"(pp.448-49). As the novel ends, Anthony is like a small boy railing at a bully he has just conquered, saying, "I showed them . . . It was a hard fight, but I didn't give up and I came through!"(p.449)

The confusion about The Beautiful and Damned as a novel has always been with its lack of a clearly focused intention. Are we to see Anthony and Gloria as pitiful or tragic? In the magazine conclusion of the novel, Fitzgerald's sympathy is with the Patches. "Their fault was not that they had doubted but that they had believed."[3] Yet when Fitzgerald writes

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3 In The Metropolitan Magazine, LV (March, 1922), p.113.

that Anthony cannot go into science as a career because "by golly, I'd have to sit down for two years and struggle through the fundamentals of physics and chemistry"(pp.111-12), or that he is unable to get into the theatre or writing fields because these careers "were guarded by professional secrets. Men drifted into them by the devious highways of writing and acting"(p.223), we can only pity the lack of maturity of his expectations and intentions. Fitzgerald's original conception of Anthony was that he was to be a kind of artiste manqué. "He is one of those many with the tastes and weaknesses of an artist but with no actual creative inspiration."[4] Like Starwick in Thomas Wolfe's Of Time and the River, Anthony is a eunuch of art, and in that sense is impotent as far as the orgastic future is concerned.

Concern with the problems that time imposes on human existence has been within the realm of madmen, artists, and philosophers. When life is viewed as a process of deterioration, loss, and death, time awareness burdens man with consciousness of a dreadful existence and an empty future. For an artist there is hope in the possibility of spanning this abyss through art. Anthony's attempts to write leave him with only "thirty-one rejection slips, headstones for the packages that he would find lying like dead bodies at his door" (p.303). For Anthony, an artist without talent, a Raphael without hands, the problem of time awareness is only that much

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4 F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Andrew Turnbull (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons),p. 145.

more intolerable. Aware of time slipping by, taking with it its bit of his existence, Anthony can only drift and wait for the inevitable. Anthony and Gloria, deprived of making any sense out of the loss and decay of their youthful hopes and dreams, are unable to re-establish any hopeful, Paradisal future. They find themselves drifting into a fearful future, living in the spiritual darkness of a dreadful Hell of lost hopes and dreams.

CHAPTER IV

In Fitzgerald's subsequent novels, time awareness continues to be a life-sapping process, and the experience remains one of a disappearing Paradise slipping into a hellish dark existence, a dreadful, dissipating future of loss and spiritual death.

The pervading atmosphere of The Great Gatsby is the valley of ashes which is described as a "fantastic farm"(p.23). But unlike a fruitful Garden of Eden it is a barren waste-land in which nothing grows except the accumulated death and disintegration of things. Henry Dan Piper adds that:

> The most persistent death image in the novel is that of the waste land of dust and ashes over which Gatsby and his neighbours must pass every time they go to New York. From this limbo blows that "foul dust" that "floated in the wake of Gatsby's dreams." Tom Buchanan, after having helped to contrive Gatsby's murder, arrogantly tells Nick, "He [Gatsby] threw dust in your eyes just like he did Daisy's."[1]

Overlooking this bleak and deathly stage is the grotesque visage of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg. Sunk into "eternal blindness"(p.23), Dr. Eckleburg, like a god who has abandoned his creations, is a reminder of a lost Paradise, a dark hell in which all men are blind, living in darkness and the ash-like remains of their existence. Although sightless,

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1 Henry Dan Piper, F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Critical Portrait (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), p.109.

Dr. Eckleburg's "eyes . . . brood on over a solemn dumping ground"(p.23), and what the eyes are able to see in their darkness is the universe of death. Staring into Eckleburg's eyes after the death of his wife, George Wilson pronounces: "you can't fool God! . . . God sees everything"(p.160). And as if answering a soundless voice that only he can hear, George Wilson is left "nodding into the twilight"(p.160), having received his mission of death.

The concept of a cruel inconsiderate God is also underlined in the character of Meyer Wolfsheim, "the man who fixed the World Series"(p.74). Nick observes that "The idea staggered me. . . . It never occurred to me that one man could start to play with the faith of fifty million people" (p.74). Fixing space and time thus provides an analogy with Gatsby, who believes that his wealth will allow him to repeat the past. The materialistic world, then, hopes that money can be its Savior. Even for Myrtle Wilson, Tom Buchanan's wealth offers the opportunity to escape the valley of ashes. "I was so excited that when I got into a taxi with him I didn't hardly know I wasn't getting into a subway Underground = Hades = Hell train. All I kept thinking about, over and over, was 'You can't live forever; you can't live forever'"(p.36). When Myrtle Wilson dies we are given the very specific information that "her left breast was swinging loose like a flap and there was no need to listen for the heart beneath"(p.138). Here, the severed breast seems to have the maternal connotations of lost childhood,

and lost past. Although Myrtle Wilson knows that we only live once, she is still unable to tell us how one is supposed to live, even once. Only Nick seems to know, unlike Gatsby, that you can't repeat the past.

Gatsby's faith in the green light symbolizes his belief, like that of an idealistic adolescent, that he can repeat the past. The term "adolescent" is used because only youth believes that it possesses an infinite amount of time, let alone the possibility of repeating time. It is this belief in the green light that leads Gatsby to his eventual destruction, for it makes him a man who "paid a high price for living too long with a single dream"(p.162). The Great Gatsby also continues the various time images present in the preceding novels. It begins and ends at night, and it is at night that Gatsby can see the green light at the end of Daisy's dock.

The theme of time as a fluid substance is present as well. Gatsby's death occurs in the pool he has not used all summer. Since we are aware that time has not advanced for Gatsby, the unused pool becomes an appropriate setting for Gatsby's death, as the "faint, barely perceptible movement of the water"(p.162) indicates that time has begun to advance again. It is raining when Gatsby meets Daisy for the first time in Nick's cottage. His dream of meeting with Daisy leaves him feeling that "he was running down like an overwound clock"(p.93). Daisy's voice is like a "deathless song"(p.97). Time seems to have stood still. The when of

The Great Gatsby is "In the meantime,/ In between time——" (p.97). Gatsby's first meeting with Daisy has him, in almost slapstick fashion, nearly knock a clock off the mantelpiece. Like the characters in the first two novels whose compromise with reality and dreams leaves them literally disillusioned (and therefore outside of Paradise), Gatsby

> knew that when he kissed this girl, and forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath, his mind would never romp again like the mind of God.(p.112)

Daisy's refusal to leave her husband (and his money) leaves Gatsby alone in a newly harsh and real world. Having lost the "old warm world"(p.162), Gatsby is suddenly aware of the end of all things, especially the death of dreams. He realizes "what a grotesque thing a rose is" and that this "new world" is populated by ghosts: "ghosts, breathing dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about . . . like that ashen, fantastic figure gliding toward him through the amorphous trees"(p.162).

Though time had seemed to stand still as Gatsby dreamed about the orgastic future and the green light, the loss of that dream rips Gatsby out of his womb-like, warm past, through the present, into a meaningless, dreadful future peopled by ghosts and lost dreams.

While time apparently stood still in The Great Gatsby, its resumption in Tender is the Night is misleading. Largely devoid of an advancing future, save to resurrect and recreate Nicole Warren's past, the novel, like the people drifting in

it, "exhibits a curiously static quality in spite of the surface motion, a blankness beneath the precision."[2]

The atmosphere of the Diver clique is one of past glory, of a future already spent. Their day is like the "relic of the previous evening"(p.6). The Riviera scene is moribund: "Cannes, Nice, Monte Carlo—began to glow through their torpid camouflage, whispering of old kings come here to dine or die"(p.15). A ghostly moon hovers "over the ruins of the aqueducts"(p.15), illuminating the tombstones of a once-great empire. The members of the Diver clique are like exiled deities searching for a new Olympus, a new Paradise. As the reigning force of this group, the Divers represent "externally the exact furthermost evolution of a class"(p.21). "The Divers' day was spaced like the day of the older generations." But behind "the expensive simplicity of the Divers" lies a "complexity and . . . lack of innocence" that "was part of a desperate bargain with the gods"(p.21).

As the spiritual center to this wealthy, drifting group of apostles, Dick Diver offers the possibility of opening up "whole new worlds" and unrolling "an endless succession of magnificent possibilities"(p.16). The description of Dick Diver as an orphaned Christ is profound. Cut off from ever returning to heaven, the earthly Christ is left with whatever spiritual future his mortal qualities will allow him,

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2 Abraham H. Steinberg, "Fitzgerald's Portrait of a Psychiatrist," in Tender is the Night: Essays in Criticism, ed. Marvin J. LaHood (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), p.142.

for "the space between heaven and earth had cooled his mind" (p.38). Like the blind, absent god in The Great Gatsby, Dr. T. J. Eckleburg, Dick Diver is a doctor, in the secular religion of psychiatry. Dick's orgastic future calls for him "to be a good psychologist—maybe to be the greatest one that ever lived"(p.132). Dick is the son of a minister, and the death of his earthly father causes Dick to pronounce with finality, "Good-by, my father—good-by, all my fathers"(p.205). This statement implies the recognition of more than just one father. In the novel, it inaugurates the beginning of Dick's complete deterioration, as if he realizes that he has been cut off not only from his terrestrial roots, but his paradisical ones as well. Like a defeated Savior, who can no longer offer future salvation save into a dark oblivion, Dick confesses strikingly shortly afterward, "I guess I'm the Black Death . . . I don't seem to bring people happiness any more" (p.219). Yet even as his deterioration becomes complete he is still described as being "like a priest in the confessional"(p.304), as he tries to help two lesbians out of trouble. His final gesture in the novel is to make a "papal cross" (p.314) over the beach that had been described as a "prayer rug"(p.3), the beach which might be called his parish.

Dick's orgastic future, which originally called for him to be the greatest psychologist that ever lived, is also characterized by his desire "to be loved"(p.302). When he first encounters Nicole, her traumatic history makes her talk about the past "as people speak who have been in prison"(p.131).

Her smile was "a moving childish smile that was like all the lost youth in the world"(p.134), and Dick found himself wishing that "she had no background, that she was just a girl lost with no address save the night from which she had come" (p.135). Locked into her past, Nicole's involvement with Dick offers her the possibility of the orgastic future of which she had been deprived. As he falls in love with her, Dick compromises his own orgastic future in transferring whatever spiritual or emotional strength he had had to Nicole, until finally his work and his need to be loved become confused with Nicole's problems, her wealth, and his own self-doubts. His awareness of his compromise and the loss and sense of waste that he feels begin to sap him of the vitality that so attracted others to him. Like a prisoner awaiting the execution of a death sentence, aware of the receding future, Dick, in one scene, "stayed in the big room a long time listening to the buzz of the electric clock, listening to time"(p.171).

Dick's loss of the orgastic future makes him aware of his own drifting, as time again is seen in fluid imagery. In one instance, "the past, the continent, is behind; the future is the glowing mouth in the side of the ship; the dim, turbulent alley is too confusedly the present"(p.205). After being unable to re-enact an aquatic stunt he had once been able to perform, a defeated Dick floats corpse-like in the water just as Gatsby's defeated body had drifted. "Nicole saw Dick floating exhausted and expressionless, alone with

the water and the sky"(p.285).

The childhood motif is also very present in Tender is the Night, and reinforces the concept of lost youth and hence a lost future. Dick's most attractive quality, as James E. Miller points out, is his child-like innocence:

> The trait that he most notably displays is his innocence—a sinister kind of innocence capable of transmogrification into corruption without passing through intermediate steps of deliberate commitment, of conscious moral choice . . . Like a child, Dick squanders his charm and himself on all whom he meets. And when he has used himself up and finds only emptiness within, he reacts like a child-man unaware of his full grown body and his brute strength. Throughout the novel, Dick's behaviour becomes more and more regressive and childish . . . until, finally, he seems to have departed entirely the world of adult moral responsibility. In the latter books of the novel, his unnatural interest in his children and the minutia of their daily lives reveals a longing deeper than he knows.[3]

The incest motif has also been explored in Robert Stanton's "Daddy's Girl: Symbol and Theme in Tender is the Night." Thus, devoid of a hopeful future, Dick Diver retreats into a sinister attraction to youth.

In Fitzgerald's novelistic fragment, The Last Tycoon, the proximity of death and the final recession of the future are apparent. The narrator of the story, Cecilia, says "I accepted Hollywood with the resignation of a ghost assigned to a haunted house"(p.3). The atmosphere of regression, as well as impending death, is further indicated in an earthquake which is "like some nightmare attempt to attach our

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3 Miller, p.141.

navel cords again and jerk us back to the womb of creation" (p.23). The earthquake operates here as the opposite of birth. It is death, but a death that returns to the womb. In this sense it is a pleasant death, one that returns its victim to the warm Paradise of the womb and relieves the accumulated burden of consciousness. The earthquake, as a reminder of an orgastic future, releases a flood of memories through Monroe Stahr's studio world. "On top of a huge head of the Goddess Siva, two women were floating down the current of an impromptu river"(p.25). Startled, Stahr sees that "not four feet away was the face of his dead wife, identical even to the expression"(p.26). At the time of her death, Stahr had been "In love with Minna and death together—with the world in which she looked so alone that he wanted to go with her there"(p.96). Since her death, Stahr has lost all interest in the future and his life consists of literally working himself to death.

> He was due to die very soon now. . . . You couldn't persuade a man like Stahr to stop and lie down and look at the sky for six months. He would much rather die. He said differently, but what it added up to was the definite urge toward total exhaustion that he [Stahr's doctor] had run into before. Fatigue was a drug as well as a poison, and Stahr apparently derived some rare almost physical pleasure from working lightheaded with weariness. It was a perversion of the life force. . . . He had cured a man or so—a hollow triumph of killing and preserving the shell.(p.108)

It is only the physical re-incarnation of his dead wife that allows Stahr to halt his wait for death. His romance with Kathleen, the image of his departed future, makes Stahr

feel that "this was a true returning—to themselves and all their past and future and the encroaching presence of tomorrow"(p.94). Stahr, momentarily rejuvenated, believes that Kathleen can recreate his orgastic future. Like Gatsby, Stahr begins to have dreams about his potential future:

> There were only ten years between them, but he felt that madness about it akin to the love of an aging man for a young girl. It was a deep and desperate time-need, a clock ticking with his heart, and it urged him, against the whole logic of his life, to walk past her into the house now and say, "This is forever."(p.116)

But Kathleen is not his dead wife. Her interest is not in the past but her own future. She tells Stahr "I'd like to see the house you're building . . . I don't want tea—tea is the past"(p.81). As a result, she abandons Stahr to marry the man whose mistress she had been. Stahr is left to continue his waiting game with only the memories of the past to sustain him until his death. Consequently, in The Last Tycoon the orgastic future has irretrievably receeded. Fitzgerald's hero, Monroe Stahr, works to kill time as he drifts towards death on the ship of the past.

Each generation believes that it will inherit the earth, whether by its "revolutionary" lifestyle, or by its correction of the previous generation's mistakes. Thus, believing in its ability to be exempt from the previous generation's shortcomings, every generation creates its dreams and its hopeful future. What it then discovers is its subjugation to the same universal law that all generations must submit to—time. Time is the x-ray, the blueprint that can be put on all human

activity. A newborn baby can be seen as a potential corpse; hopes and dreams are potential disillusionment and nightmares; in short, Paradise can become Hell. Painful and awful as this knowledge may be, youth tries to believe that it possesses a special insight, a magical dispensation from time. But the burden of youthful dreams is heavy. Thomas Wolfe observes that

> Man's youth is a wonderful thing: It is so full of anguish and of magic and he never comes to know it as it is, until it has gone from him forever. It is the thing that he cannot bear to lose, it is the thing whose passing he watches with infinite sorrow and regret, it is the thing whose loss he must lament forever, and it is the thing whose loss he really welcomes with a sad secret joy, the thing he would never willingly re-live again, could it be restored to him by any magic.
>
> Why is this? The reason is that the strange and bitter miracle of life is nowhere else so evident as in our youth. . . . we yet know that we can really keep, hold, take, and possess forever—nothing. All passes; nothing lasts: the moment that we put our hands upon it it melts away like smoke, is gone forever, and the snake is eating at our heart again; we see then what we are and what our lives must come to.[4]

Part of the attraction of Fitzgerald's writing lies in its concern with the recurring problem of people's dreams. What do I do when my dreams burst, as I know they will? How can I live without my dreams and illusions? It is the problem of losing illusions—that cushion which shields men from an unbearable reality—to a too stark reality of lost hopes and dreams.

Yet out of the sleepless night of the soul, Fitzgerald could still glimpse back into the earlier light of a bright

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4 Thomas Wolfe, Of Time and the River (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), p.454.

Paradise, forgetting for a moment the "eternal quivering on the edge of an abyss"[5] that stood before him. Seeing Monte Carlo for the first time ("the very name was so incorrigibly enchanting"), Fitzgerald realizes:

> It was not Monte Carlo I was looking at. It was back into the mind of the young man with cardboard soles who had walked the streets of New York. I was him again—for an instant I had the good fortune to share his dreams, I who had no more dreams of my own. And there are still times when I creep up on him, surprise him on an autumn morning in New York or a spring night in Carolina when it is so quiet that you can hear a dog barking in the next county. But never again as during that all too short period when he and I were one person, when the fulfilled future and the wistful past were mingled in a single gorgeous moment—when life was literally a dream.[6]

For Fitzgerald, life is "essentially a cheat and its conditions are those of defeat."[7] Yet, there is the struggle and the memory that at one time there was a possible victory, a Holy Land and a Holy Grail to seek, before the realization that all victories belonged to time. For Fitzgerald and the characters in his novels the accumulation of time awareness is the experience of losing the more hopeful period of their lives, seen as Paradise, to the bleak darkening aspect of a dreadful future of disillusion, loss, and physical and spiritual death.

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5 "Sleeping and Waking," The Crack-Up, p.67.

6 "Early Success," The Crack-Up, p.90.

7 The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald, p.96.

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